

Q and A with Eckhart Tolle TV Part 4

[Speaker 1] (0:01 - 6:04)

I don't have the sense that I'm doing any of this. I just go where people ask me to go and do E.T.T.V. You think that's a good thing? Yes.

Okay, let's do it. So who is doing it? Nobody who is speaking.

Am I speaking as a person? No. It's consciousness is speaking, using this mind to express what is most helpful for this moment.

And so be in the service of that. You are in the service of getting rid of the idea that you have to do anything as an entity, as a separate entity. Be open to what it is that wants to be done in this world.

Be open to that. And then conscious doing happens through you. And every individual, so-called individual, has a different function in this world.

Something that only you can do, you will do. Or you will join with others who have a similar path. And there are many, many different ways in which awakened doing can come into this world and is coming more and more into this world.

The essential thing is you don't have to do it. The more you get out of the way and you do it by bringing the presence into everyday life, then very quickly the answer of what it is that wants to be done comes through you. Or you may start doing something and not knowing what the power that is behind it already.

It might start with something very little. For example, like a musician who stands at a street corner playing a guitar. He doesn't know if he becomes present or she.

Suddenly incredible music comes through him. So often people do little things and then they become present and then what they're already doing expands and becomes empowered. And it changes the world.

So of course, what the world needs, it doesn't need more people who are into egoic doing, including people who think they can improve the world. The Tao Te Ching clearly states, you don't try to improve the world. That's not the way.

The way is for the power to come through you and then it happens. So the foundation is presence and then you become the vessel. You become the opening for it.

Become the opening for presence rather than being a limited egoic entity. Be here as an opening and that implies, of course, also that the personality becomes more and more transparent. It's still there.

There's some personality there that stays as long as the body is here, but it becomes transparent to the power that comes through. And so it's a wonderful adventure to be aligned with that. There's a lot that wants to come through at this time.

It doesn't choose between people. It doesn't say, you are special, I'm going to choose you. Wherever a person becomes transparent to it, it comes through.

It doesn't ask, who are you? What are your credentials? It doesn't ask, what is your personal history?

Are you worthy? Nothing, none of that. It is timeless presence.

It's not interested in your past history, whether you were the most virtuous person or non-virtuous at all, not interested in that. It's interested wherever the opening is, the light comes through. So you can't accumulate credits and become more worthy for it.

It doesn't work that way. Just be open to it and it comes. Nobody is special or everybody is special in that sense.

That sense of specialness goes away, that the ego thinks, I must, I'm looking for something to feel. No, you are so special that it's beyond specialness. You're not, that's an illusion.

Everybody feels that I want to make a difference in this world. Many people feel I'm not making enough of a difference in this world. Many people feel I could do more.

In some way that is true, but you need to get that I is not the superficial I, it's not the egoic I, the deeper I, the timeless I am, that is how the doing happens, not through the egoic I. So it's very simple really, it's not a complicated process at all, it's just bring presence in and then the movement happens. At some point you may find yourself also saying, let it happen now.

Here I am, use me, and then hold on. Please, yes.

[Speaker 18] (6:06 - 6:57)

Thank you very much. One of the aspects, and maybe you covered it, so I guess I'm asking again, but is the collective power of creativity. That was more than what I was, it was very helpful what you just said, thank you so much.

And I was wondering about the awareness as I approach the now of how whatever I'm doing or others are doing, I'm part of them, and it kind of brings me to an awe of the, the question was how does the collective part of it, how does the collective wake up to the preciousness, which you've spoken to a lot of, of how we're all sort of co-creating this universe and the power of that. And how to remember that more, which you gave, Bhavit, you just gave some advice on that.

[Speaker 1] (6:57 - 7:00)

Yes, the collective, other people.

[Speaker 18] (7:00 - 7:27)

Yes, this awareness that you have when you're, I've been having these things come up that whenever something comes through, I think it comes through me or something, how wonderful it is that someone else is right there. For instance when something's wonderful is coming out of all of us or you, how precious it is that I'm a piece of that, the all I. So it just was the, I think there's a lot of power in that to understand, but I was wondering if you had anything to add to that.

[Speaker 1] (7:27 - 9:39)

Yes, as the shift happens, is happening in you and then whoever, in whomever the shift is also happening, there's a strong sense of connectedness, but it's the awakening consciousness coming through many human beings at this time. And not everybody yet. I cannot tell you whether the collective consciousness is going to come through every human being.

There's a tipping point, the hundreds monkey syndrome, so that all of humanity will go through the shift is one possibility. Another possibility is that part of humanity will go through the shift and the other part of humanity will not go through the shift. There could be a separation of species.

One species evolved, the other doesn't. It doesn't matter. Don't worry about that.

So just trust that the shift is happening and whoever is going through the shift, you are in tune with all those people and whoever may be helpful for your purposes or may come to you or you come to them, there's a mutual attraction between awakening beings on the planet. So it is a movement, but it is all based on the shift in you. That's the essential.

There's no relying on the collective or expecting others to go through it. You, Cause and Miracle says how many people, it's a very enigmatic statement, how many people are needed to change the world and it says one. Because ultimately we are all one.

We are one. The I am is one. Ultimately there are not many of us.

There's only the primordial one.

[Speaker 12] (9:55 - 10:46)

Hi, Eckhart. My question is how do you stay present when the present that you're in is so painful and filled with suffering for somebody that you love so much and they're just

suffering so much? I was in that situation and I didn't want to be in the present moment.

I wanted to run away. And the only thing that got me through the present moment was imagining the future when they were well again or in heaven so I wouldn't witness the suffering. I couldn't bear it.

It was unbearable. I didn't find any peace in it and I tried and it was extremely painful and hard to stay present.

[Speaker 1] (10:51 - 11:19)

The freedom from the suffering, of course, is not in the situation itself. You have to go deep enough within so the situation itself you cannot transform because it is a painful situation. I don't know what it is.

It may not be necessary for you to talk about it. I don't want to bring it back up in your mind unless you want to talk about it.

[Speaker 12] (11:20 - 11:21)

My sister.

[Speaker 1] (11:22 - 11:22)

Your sister?

[Speaker 12] (11:23 - 11:44)

Yes. She had cancer, breast cancer, a really bad kind and she got complications and infections and with the chemo and she was wonderful and happy and not showing and I saw her suffering so much.

[Speaker 1] (11:45 - 11:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 12] (11:45 - 12:27)

And sometimes she couldn't talk. It was so painful what she was going through and what they were doing to her, trying to save her life a couple of times. Yes.

I wanted to run away. I wouldn't because I had to be there for her but I was reading your books and trying to be present. I know that I couldn't change the situation.

I could be there for her. That's the only way I could help her but I couldn't take the pain away and the fright. She was frightened.

I couldn't take her fear away and I wanted to so I wanted to run or think about the future

so I did not want to stay present.

[Speaker 1] (12:28 - 12:29)

Yes. Thank you.

[Speaker 12] (12:29 - 12:30)

It was hard to stay present.

[Speaker 1] (12:30 - 31:21)

Yes. Yes. Sometimes acceptance means acceptance of the unacceptable and this is an example where what is happening seems to be impossible to accept but it is happening and of course there are millions in the world who go through similar pain.

It doesn't make it any easier but it is a fact and many others go through other kinds of extreme suffering, people who go through it and people who are around them who want to help like yourself. You want to take away their suffering. You don't want them to suffer and you can't help.

So the important, the only way is really to find a place within you where you touch something that is deeper than anything that has formed, the very life within you. If you can close your eyes and find that, not necessarily now but in a painful situation, to sense, to go deep enough so that you sense the life that you are because the life that you are beyond form, the very consciousness that you are that pervades the entire body and goes far beyond is also the life that she is. So if you sit, the same applies to a dying person.

It's another thing that sometimes can be very painful especially if death seems to come too soon. Even if it's an old person who is dying, it can be painful but if it's a younger person who one would say is not meant to die but you sit with a dying person. This can take, for the dying person of course it's a different experience.

The dying person, if there's been any, even the slightest understanding of acceptance, surrender, stillness when they were in their lifetime, they will then be able to access that and go very deep. Sometimes it's more difficult for the person around them than for the person who is dying or who is very ill. You need to take your attention deeper.

Let's say you sit with your sister or a dying person or a very sick person and you sit there, the mind says I should say something, I should help but of course there's nothing you can do but you can be. You can go deeper into being and so really it's a becoming still. Let's say you just sit next to her bed or hold her hand, let go of the idea of doing.

When my mother was falling ill and her body was failing as she was getting older, she kept asking me, what do I do? And right now there's nothing to do. That was the old

conditioning in her mind because that's the Western mind especially tells you you can do something to change the situation, you can do something to remedy the situation, you must be able to do something.

And of course in hospitals it's all to do with doing but there comes a point when further doing is not possible. But the Western mind doesn't understand that, it continues to want to do and sometimes it inflicts more pain because it wants to do something. Why does it want to do something when whatever you do can only be causing more pain because it doesn't know anything else?

The Western mind is not confined to the West but I call it the Western mind even the East is now adopting the Western mind. Be is not recognized in the West as anything that even exists or is valuable but you have to go into being and if you have done it before, before the situation became so difficult, that will be a help. If you've never heard of it, even then it might be possible.

But anybody who's here and of course we will all face either being with someone close to us who is dying and we will all face of course sooner or later the moment of our approaching death. And if by then, by the time you sit with someone close to you who dies or death comes approaching, if by then you haven't gone into being, haven't even touched it, it may be hard to go that deeply within then but if you've even touched it during your life, as you all have and many of you more than touched it, then there will be any kind of extreme suffering of that kind that either happening close to you or to you will bring about an enormous deepening.

It forces you to go deeper. You have to become deep in a situation like that. If you're not deep, you suffer enormously.

But even if you are deep, you still suffer. You suffer on the surface, you cry, you feel sadness and pain but underneath the suffering, you can suddenly sense a stillness, a vastness in yourself, so to speak. Underneath that, so you cry here, but there's an acceptance underneath that is ah, and you get in touch with that which is timeless and indestructible, which is, you could say it's consciousness itself, the very essence of all life.

You are that, it's in you. The very essence of all life is in you, as it is in the other person. And so that's where you go when you sit with a person who is in great suffering or dying or with yourself, if it's happening to you, you have to become deep.

If you are already deep, but you have to know that depth. And we are here, dying of course, this is why we are here, before death catches up with us. We are deepening as we sit here, going deeper to touch the eternal, to touch that which is beyond death, which the Buddhists call Amavavati, the deathless place, the place of no death.

That's the closest the Buddhists get to the word God. No death, don't mention God, because you might make it into a mental concept and start believing in it, it's a substitute. But no death gets you to the experience of no death, and the experience of no death is God.

Don't have to say God, cancer concept. Find that which is nothing to do with the form of you, neither the psychological form nor the physical form. And it's right there, underlying it all.

Here, that's why we are here. So we are dying here, so when death comes to us, it will be much easier. And after being here, I believe it will become easier for you also to come to an acceptance of the extremely impermanent nature of all forms, including yours and ours.

They can go at any time, and it can be very painful when they begin to dissolve. They may not dissolve for a while, but it's painful. All forms are so impermanent, physical forms, all other forms.

Bodies, that very fact of the impermanence became also one of the central tenets of Buddhism, which is the Buddha's teaching of impermanence. Anicca is the Pali word, and it's an amazing realization that the world isn't as solid as it looks. It's kind of dreamlike forms appear for a while and then dissolve.

Everything that we look at, all the structures, bodies, they're just, the solidity is an illusion that we seem to see in the world, and the permanent nature and the absolute reality of the individual personality is an illusion. But if you go deep enough within you, then you can sense into that very same depth in your sister. But as you do so, the mind is still.

You can't do it with the mind. You can't do it with thinking. You can do it in absolute stillness, alert stillness.

You embrace the alert stillness, and then you reach into your sister. You just look or touch, or not even that, just sit, and then you sense that same in your sister. That's called, sometimes it's called healing, but you are not doing anything as such.

You're not thinking, I must heal my sister, no. But there's a deep healing that happens then, and whether it results in physical healing, we don't know. But healing is an awakening of that in the other.

Then you're truly helping. You awaken that in the other, but you don't do it. You allow it to happen through you.

That's the beauty of it. So is there something that you can do? Well, I don't like to call it doing.

It's not a doing, but let's just use language in that way, and then I'd say, okay, let's call it doing. Yes, there's something you can do. You can go deeply into being.

That's what you can do, very deeply. Mind becomes still, and then you reach into the other. With that, the stillness reaches into the other.

You may still be crying, because that's the surface, and you reach in, and then you touch the peace, and then whatever happens, it will be fine. That's your meditation. And eventually, you have to do it with yourself.

Yes. Whether it's next year or in 50 years' time, at some point, death comes and says, are you ready? And you can say, well, I've been ready for a long time.

I actually died a long time ago, so that's fine. Thank you. How do you experience God?

What do you see when you see someone? Do you see more than their physicality? How I experience God, I've been talking about.

This is really the only thing I talk about. Now, in different words, what do you see when you see someone? Do you see more than their physicality?

No, I don't see more than their physicality. I see exactly what everybody else sees, but I feel or sense something that is deeper than their physicality, and that is hard to put into words. There's a sensing of there's more to you than what I see, not as a thought, but as a knowing, because I know there's more to this form than I can see or you can see here.

So the consciousness beyond the form looks through the form and senses. We don't have a word for it. I can say I sense or I feel.

It's not quite right. Maybe sense it is the closest. We'd have to create a new word for it.

I sense who you are or what you are beyond what I see or beyond what you are telling me or beyond what your mind is saying or your emotions are doing. So there's a connection with presence, the presence that is in you, the presence that you are, and I have that more strongly than what I see. So that kind of almost obliterates what I see.

What I see is the same as anybody sees, but that strong sense of consciousness, the alive presence that you are is almost stronger than what I see. So there's more of my attention is in that than in my perception of what I see. It's hard to put into words something that is so far beyond words.

But this is not something special to me. This is something whenever you look at a human being and for a moment be free of definitions or interpretations, then you neither of yourself nor the other, nor definitions, be there as just a spacious awareness, then you begin to sense an aliveness within you and the same aliveness in the other. And then whatever the human beings do isn't that important anymore.

You don't react to. They may be saying something silly or intelligent or whatever. It doesn't matter that much.

There's something deeper there. They may be deluded. They might want something from you.

It doesn't matter anymore. It's very beautiful because it's only from that place that you can really relate. It's not the personality, the mind level.

That's the way to go for humans, to recognize each other as essentially sharing the same life, the same consciousness, recognizing oneness on a sense level, not on an intellectual level, feeling oneness. And that's love in a deeper sense, not the ego love, but the true love. The love comes from there.

You recognize that there is ultimately no other. The more you think in terms of others, the more you're in ego. He's like that.

She's like that. She does that. He does that.

He's like that. Remember I wrote in the book the famous Jean-Paul Sartre philosopher said, hell is other people. In the French original, if you translate literally, he says hell is the others.

That's the ego's perception of other people. A strong ego would see other people like that. And of course it can become so strong that you end up with things like paranoia because every strong ego has already an element of paranoia in it even before it's recognized as pathological when it's still normal.

It has an element of paranoia in it and so any strong ego goes around the world in that way of, what does he want? What does she want? What do you want from me?

Oh, I know what he's thinking. Evil intentions and so on. Very critical of others.

They want something that's not very normal but already part of the insanity.

[Speaker 21] (31:37 - 32:34)

How are you? Good. It's a pleasure to be here today.

It's my first time here and I have to say it almost feels a bit surreal to be in this room and you feel very connected to everyone and there's a lot of energy and you feel very connected to the source if you will, to your own divinity. But I'm a bit of a pragmatist and so I say to myself, when I leave this room, reality sets in and my reality I guess to my question is, it's about unemployment. It's about how do you, for those of us who are unemployed and seeking employment, stay connected to the source and to your own sense of divinity and still deal with the reality and the drama and the pain of trying to

find a job.

[Speaker 1] (32:35 - 40:05)

Thank you. Thank you. It's challenging.

Challenges are good, potentially. They can either wake you up, awaken you or they can pull you into more reactivity, unconsciousness and suffering. Every challenge that comes into your life, there's always, suddenly you can go either this way or you can go that way.

Potentially the challenge is very helpful. Challenge means, again a word I sometimes use, limitation in one form or another comes into your life. I'm certainly grateful for the challenges that came into my life.

I wouldn't be sitting here and many of you probably realize that without the challenges that you encountered in your life, you wouldn't be sitting here. You'd be watching television. This is something I have a little bit of personal experience with also.

Well, maybe even quite a lot of personal experience. Because for a large part of my adult life, I was actually not employed as such, large part. I was not employed and for a large part, lived on relatively little for a few years, quite a few years, even in my thirties.

Below the poverty line, I read that in the paper once when it mentioned, at that time I read the paper, it mentioned the income, a single person below that is below the poverty line. I realized, oh, I'm much below that. But I didn't realize I was poor.

I realized that there were things I couldn't afford to buy. I could buy tomato sauce, but I couldn't buy spaghetti sauce. Tomato sauce is cheaper, much cheaper.

And that stayed with me even for many years. As recently as four years ago, I sometimes still find myself getting tomato sauce instead of spaghetti sauce. It's much cheaper.

So here's one piece of advice for the jobless. There are practical things that then you need to readjust and deal with. There's some action you may need to take in order to adjust to the new situation.

All that is in the practical realm. Then there's the mental realm. And in the mental realm is where the suffering could arise, not in the practical realm.

There's no suffering in using, in eating spaghetti with this thin tomato sauce. Just one little example, this stands for many things, rather than a nice, specially prepared sauce for pasta. But if you think suddenly thought arises, and I'm just using this example to play by to many things, the thought arises, this is what it has come to.

Here I said, I have to eat this watery sauce with eating the cheapest food there is. Whatever, I've lost all that that I thought I had achieved, I have failed, probably won't find another job because billions of people are now looking for jobs. It's pointless.

I'll probably have to have the same again tomorrow. Many other kinds of thoughts arise. That's where the suffering comes from.

The suffering also comes from a diminished sense of self-worth. Now, where is that? Of course, it's in your head.

The diminished sense of self-worth is because I'm now useless, and so on. Maybe I'm too old, and nobody will employ me anymore, or whatever. I should have had a better education.

I'm no good for anything anymore. Nobody will bond. Whatever the thoughts are, a diminished sense of self-worth, and that is because your self-worth before was derived from your function in this world, which is a very normal thing, but it wasn't really derived from your function in this world.

It was derived from what your mind told you about your function in this world, and so you derived your sense of self-worth from certain thoughts in your head, and you got perhaps some feedback from others who also told you that you are useful. You were part of all that interaction that people have when they have a job. You have a boss.

The boss might tell you, you're doing well. You're getting a promotion. Okay, and the clients love you, whatever, and then you lose it, all that, and you had built up your sense of self-worth from the thoughts and the thoughts of others, and so the opportunity now is when there is a diminished sense of self-worth to go to a deeper place where a sense of self-worth comes from that has nothing to do with what you are doing in this world or with nothing to do with what anybody tells you about yourself. A sense of self-worth, of value, that in other words has nothing to do with the structure of thinking. So you can use the challenge to see that if you can find something in a deeper place in you where there's something of far greater value than anything that could be derived from thinking about yourself.

So when you lose your job, very often your self-image can become damaged, and that's where the suffering comes from because that is the self-image is made up out of thinking, and a damaged self-image can either lead you into more suffering, and it will just go on and on and pull you deeper, and you talk to others about how dreadful it is, and perhaps they'll even say, yes, you're right, and pulls you deeper and deeper. Or you step out of self-deriving your sense of who you are ultimately.

[Speaker 11] (40:13 - 41:51)

My question is on karma. I grew up in a Hindu family, and often karma is talked about as

something that provides a balance in the world, but it can sometimes seem rigid, and it's a powerful influence over someone's life. And when I listen to you speak, I feel so much peace and so much hope, and you talk about presence and being as the keys to enjoying form and creating positive circumstances in your life or softening circumstances, and I wanted to know how karma fits into all of that, because there seems to be places in the world where there's not a lot of resources, where there's a lot of brutality.

For example, I met somebody at work, and she was a refugee from Afghanistan, and she was a young girl, and the interpreter had told me that her brother and her father were killed in front of her, and she had another brother taken. And then I later learned that a lot of times the Taliban doesn't take the young boys to fight. They take them, and they use them as sex slaves.

And when I hear about stories like this, I just wonder how I can stay aligned with love or trusting the universe when I'm not able to see through your eyes yet. And how do you hold both?

[Speaker 23] (41:53 - 41:53)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (41:54 - 1:01:04)

Thank you. Now, of course, everybody is born into a certain external environment and also is born with certain predispositions. They may be partly genetic.

They may be other things that a person is born with certain patterns. In other words, we don't need to examine where they come from but just to see the fact that the human being is first of all born into a certain environment which may be violent or it may be relatively peaceful, and the person is born with inner patterns. You inherit certain, even pain bodies, partly inherit it.

Some babies cry a lot. They have a relatively heavy pain body already in this world. It doesn't mean they're spiritually less advanced.

The opposite may be the case. There's no knowing. Other babies are relatively peaceful.

And so there's a whole set of conditioning that happens. You come into the environment with certain predispositions. Then the environment conditions you further.

And in all that, there's no choice involved. It's just influences. And so you find yourself in this world with certain unconscious patterns that have become the conditioning of who the person is, the unconscious conditioning.

So karma, as I see it, is the unconscious conditioning that runs your life. And that still applies to many humans and karma is partly collective. You've been born into it and

partly personal.

They come together. So really, you can only understand karma not as an abstract subject external to yourself because then you get into belief systems and philosophy. We're not going that way.

You can only understand karma by observing yourself and by observing. And then you will know many other things. But you need to really, if you want to understand karma, you need to look at yourself.

And so I began to understand what karma is when there was something arose that was not part of karma at all. And really, here we come to the key. The arising of consciousness or presence or spiritual awakening is not part of karma.

It is another dimension that breaks into the karmic realm. So you do not become awakened by accumulating, as they sometimes say in the East, good karma. That's fine on this level.

You can make the walls or the furniture in your presence a little bit more comfortable. But there is something totally from beyond karma that can come into your life at any point within the wheel of karma and rebirth. Rebirth is, of course, part of karma.

The deeper meaning of rebirth is identification with form. We don't need to even believe in transmigration or whatever. You can look at rebirth in your own life every time you identify with a thought that arises, which is form, you are born into that thought because you identify.

Your sense of self is in it. That's karma. You are reborn.

Karma then is unconscious identification with these patterns that you have inherited, the conditioned. Complete identification of consciousness with the conditioned patterns. So consciousness is dreaming, one could say.

This is why we use the word awakening in many spiritual traditions. Consciousness is awakening. Consciousness is in a dreamlike state when you're identified with the unconscious patterns.

And then you are condemned to rebirth. In fact, many times every day, you are reborn into a reaction, an emotional, mental reaction. No presence at all, just rebirth into some form or you're reborn into thoughts that arise and you completely believe in every thought.

And then you act from those thoughts and emotions and the action creates further reactions and the actions confirm to you that you were right. If you have certain mind patterns about, for example, that other people are basically dishonest. Just one example

of people.

People are so dishonest. They're all trying to get something from me. That tends to confirm itself in your life experience.

You can try it out or you may have experienced it before you became more conscious. That habitual thought patterns that you're identified with and that is karma creates in the external confirmation that it is correct. So if you think the world is full of evil people, you will meet many evil people.

In other words, unconscious people. And even people who are halfway between conscious and unconscious, when you come together with them, your belief will pull them into unconsciousness. And that's karma.

So karma is the complete absence of conscious presence and so it's automatic. It plays itself out. And time does not free you of karma.

That is a misperception that if you only spend enough time, eventually you can become free of karma. Karma renews itself and repeats itself. It's a wheel.

And so the only thing that can free you of karma is the arising of presence. And how is it that some person's presence I cannot tell you why. I only know that at any point in the wheel of karma, presence can come in.

It can happen to a criminal in prison, condemned to death. It can happen to somebody who has never heard of anything spiritual. It can happen to somebody who has been meditating for 30 years or not happen to the same person who has been meditating for 30 years.

So in your own life, I can see from what you're saying that presence has already, I can sense that, presence has already come into your life. And presence frees you from karma, not all at once. Karma has an enormous momentum, meaning the patterns in yourself, the thought patterns, the emotional patterns, the reactive patterns.

There's enormous momentum behind that. But as presence arises, gradually karma diminishes and the energy behind it diminishes. And gradually you experience a fading out of those patterns.

They become weaker. You're no longer completely in the grip of those patterns. So as presence arises, there's a gradual fading out of karma.

Not that it matters that much anymore because once you are present, you can, as the previous questioner said, when we were talking about certain thoughts still arising, certain negative thoughts, that's still part of the karma, the old patterns, the unconscious habit patterns. Inherited, they still arise, but it's no longer problematic and

they no longer cause the suffering that they would have caused before because they are seen in the light of awareness. So the light of awareness arises and in the light of awareness, the patterns no longer dominate your life.

They no longer run your life. And if occasionally it happens that the patterns do take over, then after a little while, your presence returns and you say, ah, well, there it was again. Pain body is part of karma, which may be strong in some people, not so strong in others.

And so as presence arises, you are freed from karma. And then you have another completely different factor coming into your life. And so, for example, for a person to become free of collective karma, you need a considerable amount of presence for that to come in to remove, and it then will remove you in one way or another, either internally, you find yourself completely free, you might still live in a violent society, but internally you would be free.

There is a possibility you can have a holy man or woman living surrounded by violence. It's possible. It's rare, but possible.

Or very often it happens that life removes you out of there and you find yourself somewhere else. So let's say vast collective karma, for example, in the case of, let's say, you have the Taliban there, you have all kinds of unconscious movements, you had Soviet Communism, you had National Socialism in Germany, and for a person being born into that and not being drawn into that unconsciousness requires considerable presence. So not that many people, for example, in Germany, when Hitler came to power, not many people were able to remove themselves somewhere.

Some artists, some writers, they left, they could see what was happening and they were strong enough not to be identified with the collective when there had been a tradition of obedience to authority for hundreds of years, a tradition of following your leader, and so on. To take yourself out of that collective karma requires considerable presence, but some people had it. So it is our destiny then to go beyond karma by being the receptacles for presence.

All you can do to be helpful in this world and help others is those people that you come into contact with, you may, everybody who is awakening will find that sooner or later they become a kind of teacher to others. And what a spiritual teacher does, the teacher points out the possibility of awakening out of identification with unconscious patterns, which means the spiritual teacher teaches you to go beyond karma. And so that is your function and will become increasingly, you will find in your life, whether you become a formal teacher or an informal teacher, formal meaning that you say, okay, I'm giving a talk or somebody invites you and you give a talk, that becomes formal teaching.

For many years before this, I became a formal teacher. I mean, it's not my identity, it's

just a functional thing. It would be terrible if I saw myself as a teacher.

It's not, any identity is an illusion. Any form identity is an illusion. But it's a functional thing.

I'm saying you become a, for several years, the teaching happened informally on park benches at first, then in people's living rooms, then in little groups. And so gradually it grows and some people will continue to teach informally. So people you come into contact with, some people are, more and more people are ready for spiritual awakening.

And some, which means spiritual awakening and stepping out of karma is the same thing. And so many people will be drawn to you. Anybody who is going through the awakening process is already a teacher.

And the more you teach, teaching means you find yourself listening from spaciousness when somebody speaks or asks a question or tells you about their problems. And then you may find yourself, an answer comes out of that stillness in which you listen. And that's the beginning of teaching.

You don't have the sense that, okay, I'm going to teach this person now. That's not, that's never it. You will find that teaching is spontaneous.

So you will help people to step out of identification with unconsciousness, which means going beyond karma because you're already, it's already happening in your life. And this applies to everybody who is awakening and going through the awakening process. The Course in Miracles has the expression, teacher of God.

Of course, God is a word I don't use very often, but you could say you do become a teacher. And as you teach, this really teaching means the consciousness is becoming aligned with your mind. And so your mind is able to tune into the deeper consciousness and can be used as an instrument.

And then the words come out of your mouth. Yes. Beautiful.

So that's, you become, that's what I call the teacher. But of course, there's ultimately only one teacher and that's consciousness. The awakened consciousness is the teacher.

And it can only teach those in whom there is a degree of readiness. Your teaching needs to be received. If there's only a density of mind, the teaching won't happen.

And of course, you won't, you will immediately, some of you perhaps haven't yet experienced it, very soon you will and you will be amazed when people are drawn to you, people who are ready, and you find yourself saying something that you didn't even know yourself. That's what happened to me a lot. People asked me questions and I gave answers.

Well, these questions never occurred to me and therefore the answers never occurred to me. It's only when the question was asked, the consciousness responded. And then the mind said, wow, I didn't know that.

And so as you teach, you learn, so to speak. Realizations come. Teaching and learning is the same process.

And the deepening happens as you teach. It's a wonderful thing. So you are here to help people go beyond karma.

And at first you may do it in people you come into contact with and it may expand. It may expand into perhaps you might write a book. Anybody here might write a book, but don't do it too soon.

So it's a very, rather than looking at karma as an abstract thing to understand, it's really something that you can only look at in yourself and understand within yourself and then see how it applies to your life and others. The important thing is, time does not free you of karma. The egoic mind says, I need more time to become free.

The only thing that you might need more time for, and not you or anybody here, but some people, that they might need for, the only thing that people may need more time for is they need time to realize that they don't need time. I still say, does it make sense? They say you need, perhaps somebody needs another 20 years of suffering before they finally realize that they don't need more time.

So they do need time. They need to suffer a bit more to realize the power of the timeless. And of course, the timeless is also the ending of karma.

That's why whenever you become present, there is a gradual erosion of karma. It may well be that some patterns still stay with you until the end of this form, and it's no longer a problem. There's already a presence within which these things, you don't mistake who you are anymore.

So that's the practice, and that's the purpose, the life purpose for you, for the rest of this incarnation. Thank you.

[Speaker 17] (1:01:26 - 1:02:58)

Hello. Right now I'm at an age where my parents are growing old, and my life partner's mother is dying, and I know a lot of people that are at that age, it's age appropriate where people are dying. And our society really doesn't create any openness or availability or understanding of it.

In fact, it's completely taboo. And if anything, I think our society does everything in its power to be able to somehow offset the inevitable. There are a lot of questions for me

around this thing called death.

One that comes up for me is, how does one be with the process of death in such a way that it really can be celebrated and can be every opportunity? Because my experience is that birth and death are real openings that create huge amounts of energy coming through, and I've been present for it. But how does one really stay with that?

And there's so much interference going on in our society to being with that, both from the person that's going through the process of dying and those who are with them to support them as they go through that process.

[Speaker 1] (1:02:59 - 1:27:46)

Yes. Good question. Thanks.

Thank you. As you also mentioned, it's a great opportunity, death, approaching death, the awareness of death. It's a great opportunity because death is one way in which the formless dimension comes into this life.

It's precisely at the moment of the fading of the form that the formless comes into this life. But if that is not accepted, the fading of form is denied, then it's a missed opportunity. The opportunity is there for yourself because as people around you pass away, you increasingly become aware of your own mortality also.

The body will also dissolve. So, and many people still in our civilization, they deny death, don't want to think about it, don't want to give it any attention. There are only a few individuals, exceptional individuals, some spiritual, one or two spiritual teachers like Stephen Levine who worked a lot with death, Kubler-Ross who worked a lot with death, still exceptions rather than the norm.

But there's enormous potential there for spiritual flowering, even in people who up to the point of the beginning of the fading of the form were completely identified with the form. It's your last chance in this incarnation as your body begins to fade or you're becoming aware of its limited lifespan, your last chance to go beyond identification with form. And this is true whether it's to do with your body or somebody else's body who is close to you.

In the proximity of death, whether it's your own death or somebody else's death, there's always that grace hiding underneath the seemingly negative event. Because death in our civilization is seen as entirely negative and as if it shouldn't be happening. And because it's denied, people are so shocked when somebody dies as if it shouldn't, how could he die?

It's not possible. Because we don't live with the familiarity of death as some more ancient cultures still do. The familiarity of death isn't there.

Everything is hidden. The dead body is hidden. You don't see the reality of it.

In India, you can see the dead bodies being carried through the streets and being burned in public. And to the Westerner, it says, oh, that's just terrible. It's reality.

And so as the consciousness is changing, I feel that more and more death will become an important part of the evolutionary process, the process of the rising consciousness on our planet. And now that you mention it, it's just coming to me that I feel that I'd like to do some more work with people who are close to death or facing death one way or another, close to them or their own death. So first of all comes the, at any age, the form can dissolve.

Even if you're very young, you may encounter death close to you. So at any age, it's actually extremely helpful to become familiar with or comfortable with the impermanence of the physical form. And I recommend to everybody to occasionally visit the cemetery.

If it's a nice cemetery, well, that makes it more pleasant. Some cemeteries are like beautiful parks and you can walk around and feel extremely peaceful. But even if it's not nice, if it's just gravestones and no trees, spiritually, it is just as helpful to occasionally, maybe once a month or even just once or twice a year, walk around the cemetery and contemplate the fact of death.

I still do that quite often whenever I have a chance, not in big cities because usually cemeteries there are in the outskirts, somewhere it's hard to get to. In Europe, in the villages and so on, you have cemetery next to the church very often. And I love walking around there.

And my favorite thing is reading the names on the gravestones and to see, in a kind of astonishment, I'm still astonished by reading that and sometimes seeing if the gravestones are very old, the name is not there anymore either. It got eroded by the weather. I love the old graveyards in England, the English village churches, and there are the gravestones.

And often, you see lots of gravestones and only a few still have a legible name to them. But in the English climate, then it gets eroded after 80 or 100 years or at the most 150, 200 years. And some have been there, some stones have been there for hundreds of years.

And that's a little bit to me like the Buddhist monks going to the morgue to do their regular meditation period. It's a contemplation of death and the acceptance of the impermanent nature of the human form that opens up. If you accept it, don't intellectualize it.

Don't come to some kind of mental conclusion about it. Don't even say, well, they're all

now in the astral realm or they're now in the heavenly realm and they're reincarnated again, so they're okay. Don't even go that far.

Just stay with the simple is-ness of the fact of the impermanence of the form, the human form, and accept that for what it is without going any further. Because if you go further, you get into comforting beliefs, that's very nice too. But what I'm pointing to, driving at, is something deeper than comforting beliefs.

Go something deeper. And so instead of going to some kind of conclusion, stay with the fact of the impermanence of the human form and accept it completely and contemplate this fact in the form of the gravestones or there may be a dead body if you are somewhere where you can see dead bodies. And with that, the contemplation of the impermanence, the death of the form, the impermanent form, when it's accepted, something very deep and peaceful opens up inside you.

And that is why I enjoy going to cemeteries. And why is that? It seems that it is because when you accept the impermanence of all forms, but before you accept it, you have to face it truly.

Face it and accept it. Then out of that comes an opening within which is that which is beyond form in you, comes forward, so to speak. And that which is not touched by death, the formless, comes forward as you completely accept the impermanence of all forms.

And this is where death, the complete acceptance of death and the awareness of death and of impermanence can put you in touch with the deathless, as it's sometimes called in Buddhism, the deathless dimension within. And that's why it is so deeply peaceful to contemplate death. And if death happens to somebody close to you, now if you go into an old cemetery, you're not going to weep because these people have been dead for a long, long time.

You don't know them, and there's probably nobody left who once knew them, so you don't. But if somebody close to you dies, then there's an added dimension. You may find there's deep sadness.

You may find tears are coming. The form also was precious, although what you loved in the form was the formless, and yet you weep because of the fading form. And there, too, you come to an acceptance, especially if you're already familiar with death, you already know that everything dies, then you can accept it more easily when it happens to somebody close to you.

There's still the deep sadness. There's still tears. And then you can have the two dimensions simultaneously, the tears and underneath it a deep peace.

So the outer you weeps. The inner, the most essential, is deeply at peace. It comes forward almost as if it were saying, there is no death.

That's where the peace comes from, but it's just peace. So when somebody close to you passes away, I have the two, I experienced it two years ago when my mother and father passed away within the same year. So each time there's tears came, but also a deep sense of peace underneath it.

And then the tears come in waves. The sadness isn't there continuously. It comes in waves.

But the peace is there always. And now what I occasionally do still, I never liked photo albums. In fact, I always said, why keep the past stuck in a heavy book?

But I'm now collecting some old photos of my mom and dad and I'm going to put them in a book. Somehow it feels good. It's honoring also the form.

You honor the form, but know that that's not ultimately who they are or who they were. And yet the form also, which includes all their life situations, places that you saw together and so on, things that they experienced, it's all connected with the world of form and you also honor the form. But being in touch with the formless within, you can honor the form.

And so the two come together and then there's a balance. And to be with somebody who is experiencing the approaching dissolution of form in themselves, somebody who is about to die or close to death, that's a very sacred thing. And again, words are not that important here.

It's the stillness in you that's the most important factor that complete acceptance comes. There's not much you can say about death really, but you may find that words will come out of the stillness if it's right for that person. Some words may come out of you or no words may come.

But it's a very sacred thing to be sitting with somebody who is dying. And the more still you are, the more you can sense the sacredness. I sometimes have seen with people who were getting close to death, one could almost visually, almost visually see the form becoming translucent.

And there was an energy or a light shining through the fading form. Some people can only sense it. It's hard to describe.

I don't see it visually as such, but it's almost visual. There's a brightness coming through. And that only happens to those people who come to a state of acceptance.

They may still have occasional fear coming in too, but those who are able to embrace an acceptance, then death has a wonderful function because it becomes the opening into the formless. So I've seen some just incredible transformations in some people, and that's a flowering of consciousness. If they have lived in alignment with what is in the

rest of their lives, then it makes it much easier, of course.

When death comes, you're ready. And if you have already died as a conceptual entity, if you have already died to your ego, if the mind-made sense of self is no longer controlling you, is no longer pretending to be you, then basically you have already gone through death, the death of the ego. And then the other death is not terrifying anymore at all.

Death is the most terrifying thing to the ego. And since most people in our civilization are still walking egos, that's the reason why death is continuously hidden and denied because to the ego it's just the most dreadful thing, dreadful. Somebody even once said, I read it in a paper, death is an abomination, it's a travesty.

It's almost like people going out on a protest march with placards saying, no more deaths. End to death. Fight death.

And the way to overcome death, that's not the way to overcome death. So don't wait, as the wonderful saying goes, don't wait for death to find you because it will find you. Find death before death finds you.

And of course that's the beautiful death of the ego, which to some people happens when they experience at some point in their lives drastic loss. Death comes in many forms. It comes also in any great loss in your life, loss of possessions, loss of prestige or recognition, loss of the function in society, your social position, loss of your home, whatever it is, loss of your country.

And so there are people everywhere in the world who experience this. And some of them, that initiates in some of them the death of the ego, because it becomes so painful to the ego to be deprived of all the things that it had identified with, all the things that fed it, the identifications, my possessions, my job, my family. Some people lose their family all in one disaster.

So extremely painful things happen to some people. And some of them become very unhappy entities and for the rest of their lives they are bitter and complaining. And others, suddenly something in them opens up.

They can't stand the pain anymore, so they are driven to a place of acceptance of the end of form, the dissolution of form. And then suddenly in the midst of tragedy, something very peaceful arises within them. And they don't know why in most cases.

They are surprised, surprised to find that actually now that they have lost everything, they are more at peace than they were when they had everything. It doesn't make sense. And that's why Jesus talked about the peace that passes all understanding, because it doesn't make sense.

Not unless you understand the deep truth behind it, then it does make sense. But to

people to whom it happens spontaneously, it doesn't make sense. And yet that's how it is.

It's a beautiful thing, this realization. So loss, death in any form can bring that about. And this is how many people shift into a different state of consciousness, suddenly become deep and peaceful.

And in some people, death of a loved one or some great loss in their lives brings about not necessarily a complete death of their ego, but it, as I sometimes put it, it cracks the ego. It kind of cracks it open. It gets hit so many times.

So cracks appear in the density of the ego. And then that person becomes a much deeper person. Suddenly they have more compassion.

They have more empathy with other human beings. They are more open. They are more humble.

So that the ego got injured, not perhaps gone completely, but cracks have appeared in it. So they are in the middle between ego loss and being dominated by the ego. So there's always then, when there's some degree of surrender to the fact of loss, there's always at least some deepening in the human being.

And what deepening means, of course, is less identification with form than before, less identification with the egoic form of me, less pride, more humility, more naturalness. They're more themselves. You can feel suddenly more comfortable with them, whereas before, nobody can feel comfortable with a big ego.

Just the ego is designed to make you uncomfortable. So this is wonderful things that you can experience through that. So whether or not you talk to people about the taboo subject of death, only you can know in the moment whether that is right, the right thing to do.

It's again the same as the question that you asked. It's only in the moment you know, and you will find then the words come. Words are not that important here because it transcends anything that can be said or understood through words.

So visits to the cemetery for anybody, don't wait for death to come. Just look for it and see, become familiar with it. It's not a morbid thing.

Our civilization will tell you, oh, this is morbid. You can't go to a, why would you go to a cemetery? It'll make you sad.

It won't, not if you go there and become still and present there. It won't make you sad. But there's a lot there.

What is needed in our civilization is actually places where there are like ashrams, places

where people can come to die consciously, where they can spend perhaps the last year or two or three of their lives, and they could be sacred places of transformation. So far what we have today is that many people die in hospitals, and these are the most, they know nothing about death. Hospitals, death is denied.

You may feel very lucky you find a nurse or a doctor who is spiritually connected, and then that's the exception to the rule. But most hospital-esque structures don't know what to do about death. It doesn't fit into their scheme at all.

And so maybe some hospitals will also become semi-ashrams, and you could maybe even have a combination between ashram and hospital, or you could have just places where people who know they're going to die soon come and have spiritual guidance, and there's a field of power that they enter, and they then contribute to, because as the form dissolves, enormous spiritual power comes through the form. So this is something to be considered. And what I just said, I didn't know, hadn't really thought about it that much until the words came, so that is something for people who listen to this to consider.

Some people may feel called upon to create that, to bring that into being, and who knows, I may also be part of that kind of, that wonderful thing, what a transformation that will be, conscious dying. Thank you.

[Speaker 13] (1:28:06 - 1:29:57)

Hi Kim. Hi. My name is Liz, and I was with you at a workshop in Massachusetts in 2009 at the Kripalu Center, and at the time you shared that you were a single mother of a daughter for a lot of years, and that was my experience years ago.

So when I left the workshop, a memory came to me of something that happened many years ago for me, which was that there was an opening that was happening inside me, a vastness, and it went on for quite a while, and I felt myself more present than ever. And then one night, I had this experience of running into a wall of fear. I would even describe it as abject terror, just almost like a vortex of extreme darkness.

And the thought that came to me was, if you keep going, you will abandon your daughter. And so it didn't last that long, and it hasn't come back since, and I just kind of let it go. And I haven't had that level of fear, and I haven't had that level of presence since.

And so when I left, after seeing you, the question came to me, how has your coming into enlightenment changed the relationship with your daughter, and does your daughter in any way feel as though she has lost her mother?

[Speaker 2] (1:30:03 - 1:30:51)

Have you abandoned your daughter? No, I have not. It's interesting, because that very

thought, you will abandon your daughter, you can think of it in one way, and you can think of it another way.

You can think of it as that sort of, oh, abandonment thing, and you can also think of it in terms of letting go. I remember when my daughter, I mean my daughter thought I was totally crazy when I first came into the sort of Eastern, more spiritual teachings. You know, because I kind of entered into this group where we did a lot of eye gazing, you know that.

[Speaker 23] (1:30:54 - 1:30:54)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:01 - 1:36:04)

It's like, who can hold it the longest? And she's like, oh my God, there they go again, sitting in the living room, and they're just like. She would imitate it and go, you know, you're like this.

So she thought I was nuts. But the spiritual teaching has really taught me a lot, because she actually, you know, we had a really tough growing up years, when her teens, when she was young, it was just like she was this little angel. And not that she was an angel when she was a teenager, but she became this rebellious angel, you know, like some of us were, including myself.

And she left home temporarily at the age of, I think she moved out and lived with some friends. I think she might have been 17 years old. And I went, oh my God.

Oh my God, I've lost her, she's left. Oh my God. And I sat, because I was already sort of deeply involved in meditation.

I sat in this, with this meditation, and suddenly I realized that she was never really mine. She came through me and lived with me for a while, did the best that I could, and I had to let her go. And in a way, it was like abandoning her.

But it was abandoning this tight grip of what I conceived that my relationship with my daughter should be, and how it should be. And when I saw that, it was such a relief. And there was such this overwhelming just relaxation came, and peace, and actually happiness, that she left.

It was actually a joyful moment, and I didn't, there was no longer minding it anymore. And we do, in a way, have to abandon our roles, and the roles that we put onto others, including our children. That's the space, and that's the freedom.

It was interesting, your question had come in earlier, so when it was actually posed to me in this list of questions, she was sitting right there. And your second part of the

question, which was something like, does she feel that she has lost a mom? And I'm like, well, I don't know how she feels.

And I looked over at her, and I read her the question. She goes, oh, no, I feel like as if I've gained more of a mom, and much even more, I've gained a friend, and I've gained a spiritual teacher. I stopped looking at her as my daughter from that moment on, and I stopped looking at myself as a mother.

Yes, I have a role as a mother at times that have to be played, especially at a younger age. And when I put her out of the daughter role, she became more of like this to me, rather than I'm the mom, you're the daughter. I know better, you do.

I may have experienced more, so I couldn't have something to perhaps teach her or tell her. But it's no longer of this, but it's more like, hey, there's this. So our relationship changed a lot, thank goodness.

So yes, abandon this role. We do need to abandon the roles that we put on ourselves and onto others for she really is not your daughter, but the concept of a daughter, and all the ideas you have about what a daughter is, what your children are. And we have our ideas and our concepts about what a mother should be like and what a father should be like.

And really, we are none of those things, but we can relate to each other through stillness, and then the right answers follow. The right guidance follows. So enjoy this new stage, this new development.

[Speaker 22] (1:36:05 - 1:36:06)

Thank you.

[Speaker 15] (1:36:28 - 1:36:39)

Hello, Eckhart. My question was, you heard about the news, the earthquake in Haiti.

[Speaker 1] (1:36:39 - 1:36:40)

Earthquake in Haiti?

[Speaker 15] (1:36:40 - 1:37:13)

Yes. My question was, you heard the news and you watched the news, and you sit down, meditate, maybe you become still. Is this the end of this teaching?

Feeling the inner body is the end of this teaching? That is my question.

[Speaker 1] (1:37:14 - 1:40:55)

Thank you. In other words, is all you have to do, you're asking, be still, sit and be still? Now, what is the relationship, I believe you're asking, between this shift in consciousness and suffering that arises on the planet as it does?

How do they relate? The shift in consciousness that is happening here, right? How does that relate to the suffering?

That's a good question. Thank you. Let's see what the answer is.

Now, a little bit of the answer already came in the previous, in answer to the previous question, because we were talking about the suffering as an awakener, human suffering that arises, challenges. Suffering becomes, the challenge itself is not yet the suffering. It might be painful, but it's not suffering.

Suffering is psychological. It's when you bring the mind to it. All over the planet, there's still an enormous amount of suffering.

Humans suffer. There are many different forms of suffering. It may be a natural disaster.

Then we hear about it in the news. But there are many other forms of suffering that we don't hear about in the news that are just as prevalent, if not more so. Even simple things like people having car accidents here.

Huge numbers every year die or are maimed in car accidents. Enormous amount of suffering. Natural disasters, yes, there's suffering there, but it's relatively, if you look at the totality of human suffering, you can see that natural disasters are a relatively small part, and suffering that is inflicted by humans on other humans, a much greater part.

But they're all forms of suffering. And it could happen here. It's not only an abstract thing.

There's a Haiti earthquake somewhere on another part of the planet. We're in California. Who knows what happens in 10 minutes' time.

I'm not predicting anything. Or tomorrow or next year or in 10 years' time. Could happen here.

Then you are suddenly stuck in an earthquake. So enormous amounts of suffering and deaths and so on happen, premature deaths continuously on the planet. I often describe the suffering that is inflicted, the pain that is inflicted by humans on other humans as the most obvious form of insanity on our planet.

20th century history, 130 million or so, nobody knows the exact figure, killed. Many of them, young people, women, children, killed.

[Speaker 15] (1:40:59 - 1:41:09)

Then being present can be helpful when things are happening like that? Yes, we're coming to that. Yes, yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:11 - 1:52:42)

First of all, the important thing is you do not become part of the proliferation of suffering that humans create for themselves and others. So when you become present, you no longer act out the old egoic conditioning of the human mind, which is responsible for warfare and so on. You become a place of sanity in a sea of insanity.

But there are more and more islands of sanity arising in that sea of insanity that has been the collective consciousness of humanity for thousands of years. So this inner transformation is vital so that you do not simply perpetuate the same dysfunction. That is why we are here, so that we do not perpetuate the same dysfunction.

Then gradually sanity arises in human interactions, and you are not going to go out and kill people anymore. Not that you, we are not. You may feel called upon sometimes if suffering comes into your life and you can see that you can help others, you may feel out of presence.

Very often the impulse comes to do something about human suffering. Now most human suffering is to do with unconsciousness, so what we are trying to remedy is the consequences, the effects of unconsciousness when you help people in war-torn areas or people in places where there is total chaos. And even places in so-called wealthy countries don't underestimate the enormous amount of suffering in countries like here or wealthy Western Europe, countries that on the surface look polished.

Countries where on the surface look rational and polished. And very often if you look underneath the surface in humans, there is an enormous amount of suffering. We don't see the suffering of millions in old age, shut away in old people's homes.

We don't hear about that, whose lives feel completely, and because our civilization knows nothing about the potential of old age, so people arrive and feel useless, die. Nobody knows about how to die. People die in most dreadful in hospitals, just uselessly people trying to prolong their lives for a few more weeks or months.

All these things our civilization doesn't yet know about. So our main concern is to address the root cause of human suffering, which lies within, so that we do not generate suffering again and again. And the root cause of suffering is in yourself, in the individual.

And it's not a personal accusation because you inherit it collectively. It's the human mind, but it expresses itself in you. So the shift in consciousness is vital, so that we don't continue living in the same way and make others suffer and make ourselves suffer.

Everybody who makes other people suffer make themselves suffer too. They always go

together. So address the root cause of human suffering, and then you can be helpful in two ways.

Your main help is that through you the new consciousness is brought into this world, because, as I mentioned before, it spreads to others. And also the way in which you interact with others is different. You don't use people anymore as a means to an end, because you don't use the present moment anymore as a means to an end.

All personal interactions change. Now the interactions between nations or different tribes and groups are really reflections of personal interactions. So if personal interactions are unconscious, then the interaction between nations will be equally, if not more, unconscious.

Because the more people come together, usually, groups are usually more unconscious than the individuals that make up that group. And this is how the most dreadful suffering is inflicted on our planet, by groups of people who are egoically identified with a certain group and then inflict suffering on the other group, which they as individuals wouldn't do. And if an individual did it, go out and kill a million people, immediately you would see this person is mentally ill.

But if a nation can do it, and it's regarded as normal behavior. Nations behave in a way that often, or groups, sometimes they are religious groups, they behave in a way that if an individual were manifesting that kind of behavior, immediately it would be apparent this person is dangerously ill mentally. And we wouldn't put him in a prison, we would put him in a mental home, perhaps to be cured.

But not that many people get cured in mental homes. So this unconsciousness then can only be brought to an end by a sufficient number of individuals going through a shift in consciousness. Then of course what's left is still, when humans no longer inflict suffering on other humans, perhaps there will still be some natural disasters occasionally, and then all we can do is, if we are not part of it, we can help.

For those who feel called upon to help, either through giving money or to going there, but be careful when you go there so that they don't put you in prison when you try to take away children and help them. You can go there and help, whatever it is, but it is the correspondence between external reality and inner also. So it is possible also that the incidence of natural disasters would lessen.

That sounds a little mystical, if there is a shift in human consciousness, because everything is connected. But as we are going through a transitional period, there may actually be an intensification of natural disasters, because this is a period of intense turmoil as something new is being born. And for something new to be born, some of the old needs to die.

So there is a push, it's pushing through. And that applies to the individual and to the collective. In many people's lives there is turmoil, enormous changes, and it's all part of that.

It's all part of the challenges that come into our lives that are necessary. So we welcome it, whatever arises. And if you are part of a natural disaster, either you are still alive or you are dead.

If you are still alive, then you practice presence. If they take away your leg, you practice presence. If you take away your arm, you practice presence.

Because what else can you do? Life leaves you no other possibility except dreadful suffering. And if you are already embracing presence, if you should encounter a drastic challenge like that, you would slip into it just easily.

Because you are already, even as you sit here embracing presence, if then you encounter a drastic challenge in your life through a natural disaster or personal disaster, you would very quickly go easily into absolute awakening. And you may not even need that anymore. Life only gives you what you need.

So you can trust that you get what you need and it can be used. If you die, if you die, now what is it that we believe? We look at individuals as if they were totally autonomous.

That which comes through you as what you call life is eternal. So, although we have to be aware of the two levels here. On one level, I often point out, this is insane.

What is happening, what humans are doing is insane. We have to see that on that level. From another level, even this insanity is part of the evolution of consciousness.

And the suffering that arises because of the insanity is part of the evolution of consciousness. It's like taking a being where things are and taking a bird's eye view of things from a higher level. But part of this is recognizing insanity as insanity is part of it also.

So it's not that we're saying, okay, it's all fine as it is. Everything is meant to be as it is because otherwise it wouldn't be. There's a little bit of truth in it, but it's not the complete truth.

We need to recognize also that the insanity that is here, because that is part of what is, the awakening, the recognition of insanity as insanity, that's vital. So awakening is happening. You're fine.

You're awakening too. You are awakening also. Otherwise you wouldn't be here.

[Speaker 15] (1:52:43 - 1:52:45)

But I feel the same.

[Speaker 1] (1:52:45 - 1:52:46)

What?

[Speaker 15] (1:52:46 - 1:52:51)

But I feel the same as before. I don't see any change in me.

[Speaker 1] (1:52:52 - 1:54:43)

It'll come. Don't worry. Sometimes the human mind, you can't interpret the change through the conceptual mind.

I've seen people who have said, nothing has changed in my life, but I can already detect a complete change in their energy field. I'm not talking about you right now because I didn't know you before. I could see a complete change in their energy, but their mind was still concerned about their daily problems, but there was already an opening, and the mind cannot remember a moment of stillness.

It doesn't even know about it. So the important thing for you is to find the stillness within. If it's only three seconds, that's good enough.

Three seconds. As you stand here, can you be still inside? Let go of thinking.

Look at me. You don't need to think. There's nothing to think about.

Look at me. No thought. Just that.

That. No, you're looking away. Look.

Don't need thought. Look. Thank you.

Thank you.

[Speaker 22] (1:55:01 - 1:55:02)

Hi, Eckhart.

[Speaker 15] (1:55:03 - 1:55:46)

Part of my questions were already answered from the previous questions, but my question is, in the New Earth, you give an example of Hakuin, the Zen master, and he's falsely accused of false accusations towards him, and he responds with, is that so? I was wondering if you could give me some other examples of how a conscious person might answer or respond to that situation and how the ego might respond to the same situation.

[Speaker 1] (1:55:46 - 2:05:24)

Well, the ego one is quite easy to imagine, isn't it? The story, of course, is a story that's been around for some time about the Zen master, just very briefly to remind everybody, the Zen master who has a reputation, high reputation, where he lives, in the town or city, and then suddenly he is accused by the daughter of a neighbor who is 16 or 17 or something like that, who has become pregnant, that he is the father of the baby, the unborn baby. And so the daughter of his neighbor tells that to her parents, and they get very angry and, of course, tell it to everybody, and they run to the Zen master and say, our daughter has just told us that you had sex with her and she is carrying your baby, dreadful.

And he listens and he says, is that so? Yes, you are the father, she told us, is that so? And so immediately, of course, he loses his reputation.

Nobody comes to him anymore. It doesn't bother him. He's completely self-contained, present.

He is presence. The baby is born. The parents come to him with the baby and said, here, you look after the baby, we don't want it, it's your baby.

Is that so? They give him the baby. He looks after the baby, feeds it.

A year later, nobody comes to see him anymore because he's lost his reputation. A year later, the daughter becomes a little bit more mature and confesses to her parents that the Zen master is not the father, but the boy who works in the butcher's shop next door. And the parents come to the Zen master and say, we're so sorry, we falsely accused you.

She just told us that you're not the father. Is that so? And he hands the baby back to them.

And the baby had a very good start in life, of course. And so the story is to show the absolute non-reactivity in very extreme form of non-reactivity, not impossible. And the power that is in that, the power for good, because that situation which potentially would be dreadful, dreadful disaster and drama for anybody else with even the slightest ego left, would be dreadful bloat and disaster that gets transformed into something good through non-reaction because all the good that comes out of it, the baby has one year with the Zen master, the first year of his life. And he's then going back.

And then people come back to him. Okay. So you can see how non-reactivity transforms a potentially dramatic disaster into good.

Your question is twofold. You ask, how would the ego have reacted? No, I don't need to say too much about that.

You can imagine how an ego would say, how dare you accuse me? The daughter is evil. She's an evil bitch.

She accused me of being an evil bitch. And the parents are just as bad. And then you talk to everybody about it.

You call them on the phone. You know what they're doing to me? They're trying to, and all kinds of things, talk to everybody about it, blow it up more and more, give interviews.

And of course, you're the victim. You become the victim. That's the main thing.

So your victim identity becomes stronger and stronger. And you're angry. And anger, of course, is designed unconsciously, as the Course in Miracles points out, anger is designed to make somebody feel guilty.

That's the energy behind anger. So you want to make everybody feel, of course, it doesn't really work. And so you have a huge drama.

So you can elaborate on that. You could write a play about that. You could have a movie about that.

The Zen, What Happened to the Zen Master, with an interesting title, Zen Baby or whatever. Now, you couldn't have a movie about this, what actually happened in this story, because nobody would watch it. There's no drama in it.

Nothing happens. He just sits there. So I don't think you could, even if you wrote a script, I think the producers in Hollywood would not finance it.

It could be very nice, a short film. It wouldn't be a long film. Now, of course, if you are present, that is not the only way.

The way he dealt with that situation is not the only possible way. There are many other possible ways of dealing with the situation and still be present. For example, he could have said, well, is that so?

I would like to have a DNA test, though. So it's a practical step. You can still take practical steps.

You're not condemned to complete inactivity just because you're present. In fact, if action is possible, you do it. You could even state clearly, that's not the case.

I'm not the baby, but you're not a victim. You could simply state the truth. This is how it is.

And the important thing is the unconsciousness of making yourself into a victim does not happen anymore. And you are not imposing projections onto others, deep judgments.

The little 17-year-old daughter who is not mature enough to tell the truth, you don't need to say that she's evil and manipulative or whatever the ego would come up with.

No, you just state it's not the case. It's fine. Whatever else comes out of presence, but there's always non-aggression, non-projection, non-judgment, because you see clearly that she did it because of her lack of consciousness.

So what judgment could you have? There's lack of consciousness. That lack of consciousness is not a judgment.

But if you make that into something evil in the other person, that's the judgment. So all kinds of ways of dealing with it and still remain present. The story gives us the most extreme way because then we can really learn.

It shows us what is possible. So what a wonderful story. And the two, one could have even tell two stories.

Tell one story of, this is an idea for somebody who likes to, who is a fiction writer here among you. You could have one story that tells a story from somebody who is dealing with something consciously, and then you have the same story where it develops into huge unconsciousness and drama. It'd be quite interesting.

So next time then, if something happens to us, see, bearing in mind, don't become a victim. Don't become a victim. Don't make others into perpetrators and call them bad or evil.

The two go together. So wonderful, these challenges, aren't they? Thank you.

[Speaker 8] (2:05:46 - 2:05:47)

Hello, Eckhart.

[Speaker 9] (2:05:49 - 2:06:10)

My question has two parts and you already answered part of it. I'd like to know how much of our life is in our control and do we really need to plan for the future? And I know, again, you did go over part of it.

Or just trust what is and have faith that everything happened as it's supposed to happen.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:10 - 2:06:25)

Okay, thank you. It's often that one answer covers several questions. There may even be the universal answer that covers all questions.

[Speaker 23] (2:06:26 - 2:06:27)

Would be nice.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:37 - 2:11:40)

In control, well, if you try to control the future of your life, that will be quite frustrating to control what's going to happen. But you can control, not so much control, but you can take responsibility for the present moment, your state of consciousness at this moment. You can pay attention to what your state of consciousness is at this moment.

And you may sometimes find that your state of consciousness at this moment is one of not complete identification with thinking or an emotional movement, but a certain identification with thought or form or a dysfunctional state of negativity, dwelling in negativity. But when you realize that, it's not totally dysfunctional. If you're really dysfunctional, it means you're totally identified, you don't know it.

In extreme form, the people who are really mad have no idea that they are mad. If you know that you're mad, you're not completely mad. If you know that you're identified with a negative state, it has arisen.

Let's say you're dwelling in thinking about what's going to, fearful thinking about what might happen to you or probably will happen to you or what you're going to lose or thinking about the past. And you realize that this is what's happening, then, of course, there's already some presence there. And then you can take responsibility and be the awareness rather than be the thought.

That's the identification with thought. And one could almost say identification with presence or awareness, which is who you really are. You are the awareness.

So taking responsibility for this moment, get this moment right, which means be one with the is-ness of this moment, then you're getting it right. So whatever is arising around you, it is as it is. So there's a non-resistance to the is-ness of this moment.

And whenever you live in the state of non-resistance, but oneness with the is-ness, even the is-ness inside, if an emotion is there, that's what is. But there's also an awareness. You have to accept what is internally or internally, otherwise you suffer.

So you accept what is, you become the space for what is. And that really, that is the only difference between an ordinary human and a spiritual master, is that the master is one with the is-ness of this moment. That's the Zen master, for example.

The simplicity of that is just completely at one with whatever is arising. And there's no knowledge in that. It's not needed.

But whatever is needed in that state of oneness comes out of that state of oneness. So if you take responsibility for the present moment, then the future, of course, looks after

itself because it's no more than another present moment or the one eternal present moment. Future as such does not exist, as you well know, because you haven't encountered it ever, nor has anybody else.

There's no such thing as future except as a thought. Future is a thought. It can't be more than a thought, otherwise you would have experienced it somewhere.

It must have come at some point. But it can't because it's future. So there is no future except as a mind form.

So when you try to control the future, you are trapped in certain mind forms not knowing it. And, of course, it's impossible. You can't do that.

So you have no control over the future, but you can take responsibility for the present moment. That's the future. The future already looks after itself.

Just be, take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow will take thought for itself or something like that, whatever translation you look at. So that was one part. There was another part to your question.

[Speaker 9] (2:11:44 - 2:11:48)

Should we trust and have faith that everything happens as it's supposed to happen?

[Speaker 1] (2:11:49 - 2:22:45)

Okay. Well, the powerful faith is to trust that whatever is happening now is fine. You trust in the is-ness because the totality of the universe has brought about the form that this moment takes.

Everything that happens in the universe has innumerable causes. If you try to trace it back, you have to go back to the beginning of all creation. So whatever form this moment takes in your consciousness is there because the totality of the universe has brought about this particular form, which is not going to last.

But at this moment, it has taken this form. And you trust that that's what is, and you don't ask, why is this happening to me? What did I do to deserve that?

Why do bad things always happen to me? It's not fair. I wish I was somewhere else.

I wish I were somebody else. I wish I didn't have to live with these people. I wish I was doing a different job.

Or you can put a sticker on your car. I'd rather be fishing, golfing. I visited Ram Dass a few weeks ago in his home on Maui, and on his car, he has the sticker, I'd rather be here now.

But this I'd rather be is one of the many ways in which the mind denies the present moment and creates suffering out of that. And so all that is a lack of faith. One could use that.

I sometimes say, I probably wrote it somewhere, accept each moment as if you had chosen it. Well, each moment really means this moment because there's only ever this one moment. So let's say, accept this moment, which is the eternal now, accept this moment as if you had chosen it.

That's the state of alignment with the isness of life. I'm not asking people to, I'm not telling people, well, if this happened to you, you must have chosen it on some level. I'm not telling them that, although it's a new age teaching.

It's not perhaps entirely wrong, but I'm not saying that because I don't want to make them angry. And it's not entirely, it's not entirely correct. It's more helpful to say, accept it as if you had chosen it.

You don't need to convince yourself, okay, I've got this illness. I chose that. Why, why, why?

Or feel extremely guilty. I have failed. I failed deeply.

I must've done something really wrong. After 10 years of meditation, I'm still getting ill. Why?

In some teachings that are otherwise beautiful teachings, they emphasize so much the physical healing aspect that's a little bit unbalanced. And anybody who follows those teachings and then develops some kind of illness immediately feels guilty, which creates another big problem on top of your illness. I'm not good enough.

So we don't need that. All you need is accept this moment as if you had chosen it and then see how life develops for you, how life evolves, how life unfolds. If you just practice, then you have nothing to lose.

Just say for one day, half a day, okay, I'm just going to try this out. I'll accept whatever arises, whatever comes into my life, any person, any situation, any event, I'll immediately internally be aligned. I'm going to be aligned with it.

And as if I had chosen whatever happens, I'm going to practice that for the next three hours. Now, you may not even succeed for three hours. Well, you probably will, but some people may not.

And then see how you experience life when that is your state of consciousness, of acceptance. And you'll see an enormous improvement, not only in the way you feel, you will also see an improvement in the way in which things are reflected back to you by

other people. You will see an improvement in how other people relate to you.

You will even see an improvement, this may not be as immediate, in the way in which events happen around you if you're in true alignment with what is. And that's a truly miraculous thing to experience. Now, but for that you may have to do a little bit more than two or three hours.

But even just to get your taste of it, start with one hour. Ten minutes! If there's a place that you dislike, let's say, well, I don't know what you dislike, like a noisy traffic city scene or supermarket or the shopping mall.

Well, some people love shopping malls, so don't use that. Whatever it is that you don't like being there, and then, okay, but let's see if I go there and say, I accept this moment as if I had chosen it, this noise, these people, these surroundings. Amazing thing.

Something you'll notice when you do that, the as-if practice, your thinking mind slows down and something opens up that's deeper than thinking, awareness. Because when you have nothing to argue about, there isn't that much to think about. When you're not in disagreement with the present moment, and your ego gets deflated because you have nothing to complain about.

If the ego has nothing to complain about, it goes, and of course it may react because it notices it's getting weaker, and then suddenly, before you know it, you'll go into, oh, I hate this. The ego can come back and grab you again, but that's fine, it's all part of the practice. So the most powerful thing, of course, is the oneness with the present moment.

Now, a secondary thing that's connected with that is when you do things, work of whatever kind, any action of whatever kind, is not to primarily perform the action as a means to an end, but see if you can be active as an end in itself. So it's not primarily, a simple example, you are walking or driving to the supermarket to do your shopping. The walking or driving is not less important than the arriving at the supermarket.

And the walking around the supermarket is not less important than finishing your shopping. And then arriving back home with your shopping, the journey back home, is not less important than, because that's the old consciousness, the unconsciousness, it's always the next moment is the one that's more important that I need to get to, but I just need to get this thing out of the way so that I can arrive there. So when you're driving to the supermarket, you need to get the driving out of the way.

When you're in the supermarket getting your food, you need to get that out of the way, because you want to already be home. And when you're driving home, you just need to be home already. And when you're home already, there'll be something else.

So there's always, you want to get this out of the way as quickly as possible, because it's just not fulfilling. Of course, the next thing is not going to be fulfilling either, because the

entire mindset is the present moment is never fulfilling. It's never good enough.

The next one is always the better one. So that means the doing is not a means, not to treat the doing as a means to an end always, but as an end in itself. That's connected with the practice of alignment with the present moment.

So it can be, that's the active part of it. The passive part of it, the seemingly passive part of it is just to embrace the is-ness of whatever is arising in this moment. And then you, that's how you control your life.

To the ego, it looks as if you were, as if your life were completely out of control, but it's not.

[Speaker 9] (2:22:47 - 2:22:58)

You know, when you say at every moment, think about it as you have chosen that moment, I'm going to think about it when my teenage son is arguing with me next time. See if that helps me.

[Speaker 1] (2:22:58 - 2:23:00)

Yes, yes. Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 20] (2:23:20 - 2:23:48)

Hi, Eckhart. I wanted to ask you a question about my dog that we just had to put to sleep. And I know we're talking a lot about the human and dying and being already dead, but we just can't reconcile with taking her life, you know?

And I wonder if you could talk a little bit about that.

[Speaker 1] (2:23:55 - 2:23:57)

So you were present when the dog...

[Speaker 20] (2:23:57 - 2:24:00)

Yeah, when she took her very last breath and...

[Speaker 1] (2:24:00 - 2:24:04)

And how was your state of consciousness while you were with the dog?

[Speaker 20] (2:24:04 - 2:24:34)

Really present, but it just, her form just went so fast and she wouldn't have never died. I mean, her will was so strong. I mean, she was just tremendous, and we were being encouraged just to not let her keep suffering.

And I just, I mean, I think it's one thing to have your own life, but to take her life is just...

[Speaker 1] (2:24:35 - 2:41:34)

Yes. Well, you wanted to spare her this further suffering. That's the death, a body dissolving, a form dissolving.

It's painful, whether it's a human or an animal, because there's love there. Now, the love is, on the one hand, yes, there's a form. Of course, you love to touch the dog.

You love to hold the dog, to feel the dog's aliveness, the softness of it. But what you really love in the dog, you can't see. And I'm just, we're talking about dogs now, but we could talk about any life form, including humans, but let's talk about dog.

What is it when you look into the eyes of the dog and there is an inner response, an inner response, which is love? And this is why people, it's easier for many people to look into the eyes of a dog and feel love than it is to look into the eyes of a human and feel love. There are millions of people who find it easier to feel love looking into the eyes of a dog.

And that is because there's less in the way when they look at the dog, there's less that obstructs the dog's connectedness with the source, which is the one. In humans, there's the mind in the way. So many people find it harder to feel love when they look at a human being.

Perhaps they may have one or two with whom they do feel it, but many don't even have that. Why? Because in the other human, there is a screen of concepts and that activates your own screen of judgments and concepts.

And that prevents the flow and the realization of oneness from happening. The moment you look at a human, most humans are, we'll come back to dogs in a minute, but don't worry, most humans are trapped in mental noise, continuous judgments in the mind, stories, judgments. So if you could free yourself from that, it requires enormous presence for your own soul structures, not to become activated when you're looking into the eyes of a human being whose mind is very, very active.

So it requires great presence, and not many people have that yet. So they love, there are millions of people in this world whose only, the only being for whom they can feel love is their dog. That's, you could say, oh, that's tragic, isn't it?

Well, it's not tragic. At least they can feel love there. At least, of course, it would be wonderful if you could feel love for humans also.

A little bit more difficult, possible, and necessary ultimately. But we know now what the barriers are. Once we know why we can't feel the love for humans, then we can do

something, which is relinquish our judgments.

But it remains for the time being that dogs provide an access for many humans into feeling the connectedness with being. That is why I call them sometimes guardians of being, dogs. Because when you look into the eyes of a dog, you feel that the dog's connectedness with the source.

In a way, then, you could say the dog, or any animal really, is closer to the source than humans, closer to God. Humans have gone further out into further differentiation and complexity. And there you have the dog, but there's enough consciousness in the dog to meet the human.

The dog's already quite close to the human consciousness without having suffered yet the influx of conceptualization. So that's the beauty of it. So what you love in the dog is not ultimately the external form.

You love in the dog that which has no form, their consciousness. And that can connect you with your own consciousness. The consciousness is indestructible.

The essence of the dog remains. Where exactly it goes, I don't know. But it may go into the universal dog essence that underlies the divine idea of dog.

Plato would have said something like that, or Socrates. It goes back to the source, the dog source. We know that the formless essence of life is indestructible.

And so you can sense, as you are with it, that although tears may be there, sadness may be there, you experience the dissolution of a life form. And the dissolution of a life form leaves, especially in the moment of death and a little bit after, leaves behind an open space in you. And that open space is the formless.

I sometimes describe it as, let's say, here's the texture or the tapestry of your life with all its ingredients, people that you know, where you live. Let's imagine your life as a tapestry, intricate. And one important aspect of the tapestry is the dog.

There it is. And there the tapestry shows you petting the dog and feeling love for the dog. And suddenly you're looking at this tapestry and suddenly the dog begins to dissolve in the tapestry.

What's happening to it? It's dissolving. There you were petting it and suddenly there's a little empty space in that tapestry.

That's very painful. The empty space that's left in the body, the form has dissolved. But what was the ultimate, what was it or what is it that gives life to this whole tapestry?

What is it that makes it alive? What is it, and that is, behind it there's a light and that shines through all the forms. In fact, it gets obstructed by the forms, but it still can shine

through somehow.

And because the light shines through all the forms, it's alive. I'm continuing to use the analogy of tapestry. It feels it has an aliveness for the simple reason that the aliveness is given to all the forms by a light that shines through it, through the forms, gets somehow obstructed by the forms, but the obstruction of the forms creates a diversity.

So ultimately, every life form obstructs the universal light, but that gives it individuality, but some of the universal light still shines through. For a moment, let's use another analogy related to it, which is the cinema film in the cinema projector. When a film is put in the projector, I don't know whether they still do it, but there's a light behind the film and the film runs through the projector and that creates the images on the screen.

Now, all the reality that these images on the screen ultimately have is the light behind the film. Without the light behind the film, there would be nothing happening there. Now imagine a character in that...

We're taking this analogy a little bit further, almost too far, but let's do it. Let's imagine the characters in the film who are acting out their drama and conditioning. It may be a tragedy or a comedy or a mixture, but the characters are all acting out their script, talking.

Let's say one of the characters suddenly becomes aware that what is my reality? There's a moment of cessation. He or she is not acting out the script.

He stops for a moment and can suddenly feel that light shining through. Oh, I'm really that light. I'm not ultimately that character.

The light gives it... And so all the figures in the movie are ways of obscuring to a greater or lesser extent the light that comes through. But their lightness is the light.

Without the light, it's nothing. Okay, let's go back to the tapestry. There we have a form has dissolved.

Now, at first, if you concentrate on the lack of what was there that was so lovely, then you get stuck on that level where you equate the loveliness and the love with the form that has dissolved. But if you look more deeply, then you see that where that form was, there's actually now more light shining through, and that happens when you completely surrender to the fact of death, whether it's a human or a dog, any form of life. When you completely surrender to the fact of death, then you're not just sad because the form has dissolved, that may still be there, but you also sense a deepening in yourself because you sense that where the form was, the light now shines through more fully.

So the empty space that's left behind, this is why death is ultimately potentially always sacred. There are remnants of this in ancient cultures when people see a dead body. In

our culture, of course, you don't because we hide them.

When they see a dead body, they make a sign of respect, even if they dislike the person that just died. But when the coffin comes past and it's open, there's the dead body, they show respect because there's some obscure recognition of the sacredness of death. Why is death considered sacred?

Because when the form dissolves, the formless can shine through more strongly, and then it can be transformative in you, but it requires surrender to the fact of death. And so it can be a transformative thing, which doesn't mean you're not sad anymore. You're still sad because the form has dissolved, but if you go into complete acceptance of the fact of death, which is going to happen to you, this form, to this form, and this, and this, and this, and this, and this, and this, and this, each form is going to pop sooner or later.

Some sooner, some later, and leave behind. If you saw that in a speeded-up version of life over the next 70 years, as we sit here, let's say we have a film camera that compresses. Let's see, we're not moving from here.

Another strange analogy. I'm trying to get you to see something. That's why I'm doing all this.

Just hang on. Now, if we had a camera here, let's say we're staying here, and instead of going about our lives, we just dream our lives over the next 70 years. Let's say the camera stays here for 70 years, and instead of going about our daily life, we just dream that we are going about our daily life, which is basically the same thing, by the way.

Because in the end, you die and say, okay, what was all that? So if you had that camera here, you would be amazed. Let's say it compresses 70 years into three minutes, or five minutes, and you would then see the film.

Then you would see bodies dissolving one after the other. One here, one there. All gone.

It happens to all life forms. So we need to see that and face that fact of death. To some, it comes sooner than later.

To some, it seems premature. Sometimes it seems it's too soon. The dog was not ready.

I'm sure the dog was ready, but you were not. You were not ready for the dog's death. For the animal, death is easier.

The animal can surrender into it, although there is a will to live, yes, but the animal can surrender. Surrender is the key. Death is universal.

It's all around you continuously. Everything is dying around you and being born. Dying and being born.

We don't seem to see that very clearly. You may have to travel to India to get a true view of the fact of death because they burn the bodies out in the open, and anybody can just sit there and meditate, and you would just go, wow, wow. First you'll cry, and then you'll cry a bit more, but then after a while you come to, because we're talking about the realization of something in you that's beyond death, and that is what you loved in the dog and still love, and that cannot go away.

So let it become this meditation for you and a transformative experience, and let the tears still flow if they flow. There's nothing wrong with that, but surrender to the fact of death and realize that only the form dies. That which gives life to the form is not subject to decay or death.

You can sense that in yourself, and then you can sense it in the dog, and then the death of the dog is not as heavy as it would be if you were only identified, if you equate the essence of the dog with the form of the dog. So what you love in the dog is the dog's consciousness, which ultimately is one with your consciousness. It's life itself, an expression, a beautiful expression, temporary, of course, of the one life, and then you honor that and are grateful for that.

You also are that.

[Speaker 20] (2:41:35 - 2:41:42)

So it's best to honor the process of taking her life as well? I mean, I think that's what bothers us the most.

[Speaker 1] (2:41:42 - 2:41:45)

That was a compassionate thing to do.

[Speaker 20] (2:41:46 - 2:41:47)

We feel so guilty.

[Speaker 1] (2:41:47 - 2:42:06)

Yes, but that's, again, that requires surrender and see that it came out of love for the dog, not any other reason, and it was therefore compassionate. Now, the mind will construct further thought processes out of that, but you don't need that.

[Speaker 23] (2:42:06 - 2:42:06)

Mm-hmm.

[Speaker 8] (2:42:24 - 2:44:35)

I kind of want to speak about earlier in the week. I was away for a period of time in the

fall, and then I came back about a month ago, and I was in Asia in the bright sunshine and, you know, kind of open culture, a lot of sharing of just basic open-heartedness. I mean, I think others have had that experience, and coming back to Vancouver is kind of rainy and closed down and cold, and, you know, also coming back to North America in the middle of the crisis and the chaos and also the hope of Obama, like the kind of transition Bush-Obama, but in the middle of all the economy breaking down and stuff.

So what I was experiencing in my direct work environment was a lot of... it seemed to me what I was observing was a lot of criticism and fear, you know, anger at different things, entitled behaviour, that kind of thing that we do in North America very well, I think. But, you know, so I found myself initially, I was kind of observing it, and then I was, like, not wanting to get involved in it.

And then, of course, I gradually started getting really involved in it, and it kind of hit me by the beginning of the week. Like, I was in a state of protest against the environment and also against the feelings that were coming up in me related to the environment. So I was in, you know, a fair degree of emotional discomfort and stuff.

And when I sat with it and also played what I call Eckhart tapes from other retreats and stuff, which I find settle me down, you know, what I saw was this field of alienation both in myself and in the environment around me. So, you know, when I identified I was feeling, I was identifying the feeling of being alienated, I was feeling very alienated. And it was somewhat liberating to kind of feel that.

And then I could kind of see it, and then I was more at peace with it because I had a name for it or something like that. But I wonder if you could generally kind of talk about that. It's like a low-level sense of discomfort, of non-acceptance of what's going on around.

And it does really feel like one really feels kind of alienated from everything, including one's deeper sense of connection and stuff like that.

[Speaker 1] (2:44:35 - 2:44:36)

Yes. Thank you.

[Speaker 8] (2:44:36 - 2:44:37)

Thank you. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:44:39 - 2:54:36)

Well, what you're describing is most people's normal state of consciousness, that state of alienation. For most people it's so normal they don't even know it because they have nothing else to compare it with. But you had just returned.

Perhaps you were in a more liberated state while you were away in Asia. At that time you felt you were able to be more present there, perhaps. So you came back here, and then you linked into the collective state of consciousness in the Western Hemisphere.

So the state of latent discontent in the background and sometimes more acute unhappiness and dissatisfaction in the foreground is quite normal for almost everybody who is still unawakened and also still happens to people, even people who are going through the awakening process, often periodically fall back into that state for a while. So what to do? Well, acceptance is perhaps the key for you.

Acceptance of first a reorientation of your conscious attention to this moment because that's what is. And then acceptance of whatever is here at this moment in your life, whatever situation you encounter here. If you want to become free, don't listen to too many media things for a while so that you become more deeply rooted within first.

If you are not deeply rooted in beingness, in the unconditioned consciousness, in the inner stillness, if you are not rooted in there, then even just listening to the news on TV or radio will put you in an unbalanced state, immediately upset about this, and hundreds of things seem to be going wrong in the world. And then you react to people around you. All that because you're not at home in yourself.

So to feel at home in yourself in the present moment, in yourself, to be at ease with yourself, requires you to take your attention away from the thinking mind as a conscious choice. You choose to take your attention away from that because it's not really the external things that are pulling you out. It's your mind's reaction to the external things.

Take attention away. Breathe. Feel the inner body.

Look around. Accept the form that this moment takes, whatever, wherever you are. You might be on a bus.

It's raining outside. It looks gray. The mind would say it looks gray and miserable, but miserable is something supplied by the mind.

It's just gray. It's not gray and miserable. It's just gray, and the miserable is the mind's interpretation of the weather.

But the moment you believe in the thought that the weather is miserable and people around you are looking miserable, you experience certain emotions. This is the body's response to the mental judgments that you totally believe in, and then you feel miserable suddenly because the weather is miserable, the people around you are miserable, and life is miserable, and you get trapped in. You hypnotize yourself into that thought pattern, and you experience the corresponding emotions.

And once you are trapped in that, whatever situation you go into, and this is how it

works, reflects back to you your state of consciousness. You find more miserable people. It's not easy, not difficult.

And you get into a more miserable situation, and the next day it's miserable again, the weather. These are the minds. So life is becoming complicated for you because your mind is creating a complexity and judgment, a level of judgments and interpretations that is pulling you out of yourself, and then believing in it, and then believing that you live in a world that is unpleasant.

But it's not really that. It's the mind's activity that's unpleasant, and you believe in it, and then you have the emotions that go with that. So taking your attention away from that, breathe, feel, be, look around, and then next time you're on the bus or in the car, wherever you are, and of course it's the same kind of weather again, around Northwest Pacific for quite a few months, it'll probably be the same, and you look around, suddenly it's no longer miserable.

It's just rain, moisture, the sky is gray, but light is filtering through. No need to judge it. And the person next to you, they might not be smiling, but that's fine.

And perhaps when you get off the bus, you smile at them. There's no judgment. It's fine.

You bring a different energy into this world. Rather than be the victim of this world, which ultimately is really your mind, rather than be the victim, something new comes into this world through you. And so you are the bringer of something new, and rather than reacting to all that, which really is being stuck in your mind, the simplicity of this moment, and then you gradually feel more rooted in being.

Just this. Life is not complicated. Why?

Because the present moment is never complicated. Well, I don't find any complication for yet now. And the present moment, of course, life is always the present moment, only that, only just this moment.

All I need to do is be, allow this moment to be, whatever a person comes into this moment, that's what is. The is-ness or the such-ness of this moment. Become one with that.

No need to judge or to say anything about it, just it is. Simple, very simple. Then you feel you're arriving at yourself.

One with yourself. That's your practice. It's maybe challenging, a little bit more challenging here.

Some people find it easier in India to be present, or to be spiritual. Sorry, spiritual. Other people actually can't do it in India.

In fact, they're longing to get back and say, it's easier at home. It just depends on your... But India can teach you surrender.

That's good. More than the West, because in the West you expect things to be how they should be. In India you quickly learn that they are not how you demand they should be.

The train is not there, or whatever. And things, you can't plan too much ahead because it's not going to be the way you plan it. Everybody who goes to India learns that, and people who are then able to surrender suddenly feel much better in India than they feel at home, even though the trains are not arriving on time, and so on.

But people who can't surrender, for them it's miserable to be there because they have no control anymore over their surroundings. This shouldn't be happening. That shouldn't be happening.

There should be hot water. I paid for it. Look, no hot water.

And then somebody comes, oh, just wait one hour and the hot water will be back, and then five hours later you're on again. It's still not here. You haven't surrendered yet.

And so it doesn't matter where you learn surrender. You can learn surrender in India, or you can learn surrender on the bus in Vancouver or in Seattle, or you can learn surrender in Detroit or in New York, or Piccadilly Circus in London, wherever you are. There's no reason why you can't be with what is in the now, just that.

Thanks.

[Speaker 5] (2:54:46 - 2:55:48)

Hi, Eckhart. Hi. I came from Austria with my grandmother.

Austria? Yes. Oh, wow.

And I have also a question for you. But before I question this question, I want to ask a question what arises at the moment. I feel that I have such a rock in my head which lies on emotions, thoughts, and the consciousness which wants to come out.

That is such a huge thing which will come out, but it can't because the rock is not right yet because I speak to it. But when I sit, then it's there. Oh.

And that's resentment.

[Speaker 1] (2:55:50 - 2:56:06)

Does everybody understand this? No. Let's see.

We need to understand exactly what your question is. Maybe you can say it briefly in

German and then I'll translate it.

[Speaker 5] (2:56:12 - 2:57:00)

It's still difficult to speak in German. It feels as if a big, heavy boulder or stone were lying on top of my thoughts and my emotions. Yes, and that is resentment or resistance.

And I have to suffer this because I don't want to awake. Now it speaks my ego. So you feel there's resentment and that's what it is?

[Speaker 1] (2:57:00 - 2:57:15)

Yes. Okay, there's a negativity, a negative emotion in you. Yes.

Okay. Okay. Okay.

Well, you know it's there. Do you feel it all the time or sometimes only?

[Speaker 5] (2:57:16 - 2:57:25)

No, all the time. All the time. In Vancouver, it's better than in Europe.

Ah. That's interesting.

[Speaker 1] (2:57:28 - 2:58:14)

Well, the ultimate solution to this is not, of course, moving somewhere else, although you could try that too. It could have something to do also with the collective pain body of where you live and you perhaps sense it very strongly. A very powerful way of dealing with it is through simple acceptance of that rather than creating some kind of resistance to it.

In other words, feel it. Can you feel it at this moment?

[Speaker 5] (2:58:16 - 2:59:04)

Yes, the pain in the head. That's the turn from emotion to physical pain. It's very...

So has it turned into physical pain? Yes. Before I can answer all my questions by myself, but then the ego was so clever that now it makes resistance and so I can't answer my questions anymore because when I would answer the question I would be enlightened, I think.

And it won't be enlightened. That's normal, but...

[Speaker 1] (2:59:09 - 3:00:20)

If it is the pain body, as I suspect, then it can turn into physical pain for some people

when there's too much presence for it. There's too much presence for the pain body to move into your mind and control your thinking and create drama in your life. If there's too much presence, it can happen, but the only thing it can do is to suddenly you feel a pain somewhere in the body and there it is.

That's all it can do, but it cannot renew itself through that. It's an intermediate stage between being in possession of the pain body and being free of the pain body. It's an intermediate stage where sometimes the pain body manifests as physical pain, and that's a good sign because it's a sign that there's so much presence that it cannot use your mind anymore.

Yeah. So that's good. And when you feel the pain body, when you're back in...

[Speaker 5] (3:00:20 - 3:00:28)

Do you live in a city or in the country? In a city, but it's very small. Small city.

[Speaker 1] (3:00:29 - 3:00:59)

Yeah. So when you're back there and you feel it again, just practice being aware, alert. Don't react to it.

Every reaction strengthens the pain body, and even saying, I don't want this anymore strengthens the pain body. Allow it to be. Be the space for it, and you are much bigger than it.

Be the space for it.

[Speaker 5] (3:00:59 - 3:01:22)

Give it space. But now what was the other question? Yes, now the question which brought me here.

When I want to buy a new device, expensive device, such a notebook, and the way to the shop is full of stumbling blocks, is that a sign that I should not buy it?

[Speaker 1] (3:01:25 - 3:03:31)

I think many, especially new age people, have that problem. They often are not certain. They want to do something or start doing something, and suddenly something happens that seems to block what they want to do, and they say, well, that probably means that I shouldn't be doing it.

But, of course, it doesn't necessarily mean that. You have to be very alert, because if you give up the moment an obstacle comes in, then you will probably never do anything, because whatever course of action you undertake, you will find that there will

occasionally, obstacles will occasionally arise. However, sometimes there's a series of obstacles, one after another, and you need a certain amount of wisdom to look and see whether this is an obstacle that can be overcome or whether this is a series of obstacles, and the message is, of the greater intelligence, that this is not the right course of action for you.

Nobody can tell you in any particular situation which one it is, but we can be certain that the first or the second obstacle is not necessarily the universe telling you that you should not, whatever it is. So you wanted to buy, this is just one example, of course. I bought it, finally.

And then, can you give, tell us what the obstacles were, just as a matter of interest?

[Speaker 5] (3:03:32 - 3:03:53)

What happened? Just eager things like the delivery time is long, and I stand here, it's not in front of me, and I have waited two weeks instead of one week to come in. Yes, and now you have with your present.

[Speaker 1] (3:03:56 - 3:15:23)

Now, of course, other obstacles can come through your own mind. You decide to do something, and then the mind says, should I really be doing this? And so it can, the mind can, of course, sabotage many endeavors easily by bringing up continuous doubt.

So this, of course, the situation is not terribly important, but it's just an example, because ultimately, on the larger scale, it doesn't matter whether you buy it or not. Ultimately, it doesn't really matter. But there may be other things that do matter, relatively speaking, whether you embark on that course of action or whether you decide not to.

But it requires some amount of, you need to tune into the situation and look at the obstacle and see whether, obstacles, by the way, should not be attacked directly, but many obstacles, by bringing a non-reactive attitude towards them, can be transformed, and suddenly they are no longer obstacles, or they can be bypassed, but not attacked. That is the, because if you attack an obstacle, now, obstacle can come in the form of a human being who seems to be in your way, either not physically necessarily, but seems to block what you want to do. Now, if you attack, I mean, not physically, but verbally or mentally, if you attack that human being, you actually strengthen obstacles by attacking them head-on.

You strengthen opposition. That applies to human beings who maybe become obstacles to where you want to go, or even situations. If you attack a situation, if you feel angry about it, if you feel, if you complain about it, you're really, you are attacking a situation that has arisen in the present moment.

So you are violent towards life. Any situation that you attack, mentally, verbally, whatever way, you're actually creating, you're strengthening the obstacle. And it's a Western way, the Western mind, which is becoming the universal mind, thinks in terms of, I need to eliminate obstacles.

And that includes things like antibiotics, which says you need to eliminate. On the one hand, it's been a great thing, but there's a huge downside to antibiotics. And in the long term, you cannot kill these.

They are also, they are vital for life. And if you kill them for long enough, they emerge in a new form, which you cannot kill anymore. That's what's happening with antibiotics.

So you strengthen the original enemy. So anything that you regard as an enemy, then there's unconsciousness there. You are strengthening the obstacle.

So you, and many people go through life encountering one situation after another. And if you look clearly how they approach the situations, they treat every situation more or less as an enemy. It's in my way, or people too.

They want to use people just for my purpose. And if they don't serve me, I'm getting angry. Of course, you have, these are all cases of great unconsciousness from simple things like a man asks a woman to go out for dinner.

She says no, and immediately becomes aggressive and says, you bitch, you. So he didn't get what he wanted and immediately becomes an enemy. Anything that doesn't give you what you want, you turn it into an enemy.

That's your attitude becomes that. That's a dreadful way to live, but millions of humans still live like that. So anything you attack head on, you will strengthen and you will become more deeply enmeshed in karma.

And even, this is why you read all these things, the fight against this, the fight against that, the war against drugs. The war against drugs, they've had it for a long time. There are more drugs now than ever.

But they're fighting the war against drugs. The war against poverty. You can generate wealth, but you can't fight poverty.

The war against terror. We must use terror to defeat the terrorists. Not the war against terror.

Nobody consciously said we are going to use terror to defeat terror. But if you see the actual consequences of the actions that were taken, it comes to the same thing in many cases, because so many innocent people were killed through unconscious action that it amounts to as if we almost as if we had said, we are going to do the same that you did

to us. And you weren't even the same people, but that's another matter.

So it's fighting, fighting the aggression that's behind it, the egoic aggression, getting my way or our way. It doesn't work, but it takes a lot of suffering, it seems, for humans to realize that it doesn't work. So any obstacle that arises, never make it into an enemy.

Don't make anything or anybody, any human being or any situation or any place where you are, or mentally some kind of another group of people. Don't make anything into an enemy. At the moment we are talking about obstacles.

So obstacle is you just, and they arise continuously in any business endeavor. You want to have some kind of business you want to create, and so constantly things don't go the way you want them to go. People don't do what you want them to do.

That's in the nature of things. Constantly you try this and it doesn't work, it goes wrong. Successful business and entrepreneurs say that they have to try ten things, nine things fail, one thing works, but that's enough to provide them with a good living.

But they try nine things and they don't work. But the thing is not to, when things don't work, not to indulge in any kind of negativity. When people don't cooperate, don't make them into enemy by attacking or complaining about them, but immediately always adjusting to this is the situation, what can I do now?

But never attacking it. What can I do now? Perhaps it can be changed by perhaps a little thing can be turned around, or I can walk around it, or underneath it, or float above it, so to speak.

Always immediately adjusting to the form that this moment takes, never complaining about the form that this moment takes, a human being, a situation, whatever. Never complaining. I can see so much, humans waste so much energy in useless opposition.

And they complain, you know what it did? They were totally, she was dreadful, this person, the shop assistant was just dreadful. Just don't, just be with what is.

Go to someone else without complaining. Just always immediately adjusting to this situation. That's what is, and then see what's possible.

So obstacles, never attack them. Look at them, walk around them, allow them to transform. And occasionally it may happen that life is giving you a message.

Occasionally you try and try this and that, and it still doesn't work. But usually what happens is something, life is showing you an alternative. So perhaps let's say you wanted to become a great singer, and you go to auditions, and you try American Idol, and you get laughed off the stage, everybody laughs about you, and then you try again somewhere else, and they say, and finally you say, well, I will, but obstacles, I'll continue

to try.

But suddenly you realize somebody else is singing a song that you wrote, and that actually sounds great. And so life is telling you, you're not a singer, you're a songwriter, for example. I'm just giving one example of life is showing you a possible alternative.

And that life does that when you pursue, although there are obstacles, you continue to persist without attacking, and then life usually shows you an alternative. Oh, this isn't really where I wanted to go, it's not where I'm going to go, I'm going to go there. Life is showing you, oh, come here, you're not really meant to go there, come here.

So it's an art, it's part of the art of living. So when life presents obstacles, the greatest learning for us is to learn how to approach the obstacles that life brings up. That's a wonderful learning in consciousness, so that we approach life consciously.

So I wish you all the best, and thanks for coming. Thank you.

[Speaker 10] (3:15:24 - 3:15:52)

My name is Alexei. I'm honored to be here, Eckhart. I came from Toronto.

Before that, I actually came from Kiev.

[Speaker 1] (3:15:53 - 3:15:53)

Kiev.

[Speaker 10] (3:15:53 - 3:17:11)

Yes, from the Soviet Union. For many years, I studied yoga from Kiev. I got the first book translated in Ukrainian on yoga, and it seemed like I liked it.

However, when I came here and I went to some ashrams, I saw some gurus. I got more and more disappointed and hurt in many ways. And about a year ago, a year and a half ago, I came to a place where I decided to leave yoga.

I have Jewish roots. I love Jesus Christ. I really want to leave yoga, and I also was exposed to your teachings, to CDs, and I really like them.

I've learned, not learned, it's a practice, but I practice not thinking, and it is really helpful. But however, when I decided very strongly to leave yoga, I felt at psychic levels that I'm being interfered with. And sometimes it is very threatening, even too much, and I wonder what should I do about it.

[Speaker 1] (3:17:12 - 3:17:17)

So can you say just the last thing you said when you stopped the practice?

[Speaker 10] (3:17:18 - 3:17:37)

Yeah, I stopped practicing yoga. I stopped meditation. I meditated for 20 years, and I stopped it.

I felt really good about it, but I felt that my thoughts are being invaded, that I'm being interfered with, and sometimes I cannot describe it here.

[Speaker 1] (3:17:38 - 3:46:16)

So you feel some external sources bringing thoughts? Yes, yes, yes. Okay.

That is, it's possible, the human mind is connected to the collective mind. Every individual mind is really part of the collective mind, and of course it's quite normal for things to flow in that really come from somewhere else. But it all comes down to being aware of thought and not identifying with thought, being there as the awareness.

And if you feel a strong energy stream, a very persistent thought there, then the awareness needs to be more alert, more intense, to dissolve that. But the awareness doesn't say, I want to dissolve that. It's enough for the awareness to be there, and in the awareness, thoughts dissolve.

But the awareness does not want anything. So awareness is simply there as a presence. But as in that presence, things begin to change and dissolve.

Awareness also implies acceptance. You accept that this is there right now. It doesn't matter where the thoughts come from.

They are thoughts. So the transcendence of thought is only through awareness, no matter whether they're your thoughts. Ultimately, no thoughts are your thoughts.

They're all part of the collective mind. So if anybody has obsessive thought patterns, it all really means that an energy field there has got stuck in there and refuses to go. And by not fighting it, it is much easier to remain aware.

If you make it into something that you want to get rid of, you create further energy for it. So you don't mind it. That replies any state that arises.

If it's a very powerful thing, you say, okay, it is there. I don't mind. It is there.

Don't make it into an enemy that you need to get rid of, but be there as intense presence. It's like, let's say, a monster comes into the room and you just go. If a wild animal came close to you, if you stayed absolutely present, it would be very unlikely to attack you.

I haven't tried it out. Well, I have tried. Occasionally, it's happened with dogs that

seemed a little bit potentially dangerous.

But I have no experience with tigers or lions. And you remain absolutely just present. I have experienced with wild humans.

There was one person in my family, not immediate family, but secondary family, who was mentally unbalanced for several years. And whenever I visited her, I knew that the moment I stepped into the house, my presence, the dimmer switch of my presence, as I call it, went up, and I went. And then we hugged, and she was fine.

And then she started talking about her delusions. And any fall in presence, immediately she would accuse me of this or that. And she would build me into her delusion, illusory system of thought.

You are one of them, aren't you? No. But if you stayed present, and several times, the entire structure of her delusion collapsed, and she was totally there.

And the moment I went away, it came back. And the only time when she actually accused me of doing things which were called fantasy were when I was not there, when I called on the phone, said, I've been thinking about you. But as I was there in presence, she couldn't think about me because I wasn't thinking.

So the same thing you do with your own mind. It doesn't really matter where you confront the mind, the mind in someone else or your own mind. And you know that sometimes people have asked me, they hear voices.

This is a thing, and again, there are many explanations for that. All kinds of explanations. Are they produced by your own thoughts?

Are the voices actual little presence, little spirit presences, little demons that whisper into your ear? That's how some people experience that. And I'm not going into that.

I'm not giving any explanation, but I'm saying, treat the voice, if you hear a voice, treat it the same way as a thought, which means don't react to it and don't get engaged in it and don't believe in it. Just say, there's a voice. And when the voice says, I am God, there's a voice saying it's God.

And if the voice says, I'm the devil, you say, there's a voice saying, I'm the devil. So it's a voice. You don't get engaged with it.

You stay there as the presence. What I'm saying is just the verbalization of presence. Presence itself has no verbalization.

So you are dead. Oh, there's the voice again. And then you watch the voice.

And then you see that the voice subsides after a while. If you don't resist it, it doesn't get

any energy from you. So you do that, whether you hear it as a voice, whether you do it with the thoughts in your head, don't resist.

Be the space for it. This is beautifully expressed in the film A Beautiful Mind, where the protagonist, it's based on a true event, the protagonist sees people that are not there, delusions. And he discusses with them.

So he talks to nobody. There's nobody there. But he sees these people.

They have a very clear presence. He doesn't know he's insane. To them, it's very real.

Then he realizes that he's insane at a later point. And at that point, he doesn't give them any attention anymore. He allows them to be there but doesn't interact.

Whatever they say is, I'm not interested. You can do the same thing with your thoughts. Whatever they say, I'm not interested.

It's just presence. Then you transcend. And even persistent thoughts subside.

Does being in the now or awareness alter the dream or movie that is being played? I understand that the dream or movie is not real. Now what?

Laughter That's quite a good question. I understand, okay, you can have some conceptual understanding if you see that all forms are fleeting. That is undoubtedly true.

And you say, God, Eckhart says it's like a dream. And if I look at it, it's actually true. It is a bit like a dream because yesterday is dissolved already, just like last night's dream is gone.

It's evaporated. And my people that I knew have dissolved. And what I did years ago, my vacation five years ago, we were in Europe.

Look, there are the photos. Where is that now? It's dissolved already.

It's just a figure standing in front of the Eiffel Tower. What is all that? It's gone already.

The fleetingness is just an amazing thing. And so conceptually you can understand it and say, okay, all of it is a bit like a movie. Now what?

Now that doesn't free you really from because the next moment something happens and you're totally part of it again. You're totally trapped in the movie and compulsively you're acting out your part, your script, your conditioned behavior patterns, your conditioned thinking, your conditioned reactions. So one moment intellectually you can say, yeah, it really is like a movie, and then the phone rings.

What? You're playing your part again. You're in the middle of it.

You've completely forgotten that it's a movie. It is only when nothing is happening, no phone is ringing, nobody is knocking on your door, and then you can sit again and say, yeah, it's all like a movie. So there needs to be a deeper realization that goes beyond the conceptual, and that is the opening up of what I sometimes call space consciousness in you when you truly contemplate the impermanence of all things, not just as an intellectual idea that you agree with, but to look at it without going beyond concepts and look, face the fact of impermanence directly.

For example, by looking at if somebody close to you dies, sitting with their body for quite a while, and then go through the emotions, then go perhaps beyond the emotions or go to see any dead body, although for that in the West you can't do it. In India you can. You can't just go somewhere and say, I would like to see a dead body.

You have to. They won't allow it. In India you just sit in certain street corners or in certain places, and you see they're carrying them past to the funeral pyre, and you can just sit there.

And the most powerful thing would be then to see a dead body being burned without any concepts, just face the fact directly. That opens up space consciousness. That opens up the depths in you where you begin to disidentify from form.

When you see a form dissolving in front of you and you don't conceptualize, you just face it. It is so amazing, and even me talking about it can to some extent help you to go through that as you imagine it. It's sometimes enough to imagine it, the form dissolving, being burned, the body that was so real a few hours ago.

It's now dissolving in flames. And that is such a, it's so incredible. If you had totally believed in the solidity of the physical universe, it's so incredible that you become speechless and thoughtless.

And in that, when the form dissolves and you face it completely, something opens up within you that we can call the formless, and that's deeply peaceful. Not happy. No.

Deeply peaceful. And it can even happen when there's sadness, deep sadness, and yet behind the sadness there's a deep peace. And this would be the case if somebody close to you dies and you see that happening to somebody.

You could not not weep if you see your father or your mother being burned. Now, here you won't, they won't allow you to see it, but if you could, you would weep. But there's a possibility that at the same time, because it is the universal condition of all humans and all forms, and it's your turn quite soon too, seeing all that, something in you would, although there are tears, and yet you see how short-lived it all is, and then something opens up in you which is spacious and has no form, and that's consciousness itself.

So consciousness can disidentify, the disidentification can happen when you deeply

contemplate the fleetingness of a form, a human form. It can even be with an animal. Your dog dies.

It could happen also. Some people become very deeply, very close to an animal after living with an animal for many years, and suddenly it goes. So again, this is where loss comes in.

Any loss that can also do it, but of course the deepest loss is the loss of a human. And so when it's not resisted, then you see it, and you can't, any idea that you formulate will be running away from the simple and bare fact of impermanence. Any conceptualization, explanation will stop you from going deeper.

Even if you have the explanation and you say, well, they're not really dead, they're really moving on, and I just have to, okay, but if you don't explain anything, you go deeper beyond form. Rather than explaining to yourself that they exist in some other form, which of course then eventually will also go through transformation again and so on and so on. That's the power of contemplating transience, which is everywhere.

For me, it's always even a spiritual thing to look at old photos of people. Nobody knows who they were. And I always, whenever I see them in magazines or sometimes in antiquarian bookshops they have collections of, you see these old photos and they're just, they've all dissolved.

And I find that this is deeply peaceful. Old films made, let's say a film made in 1930, 1935, 40, and all these people that are running around the screen and getting excited about this and that, the actors are all gone, they've all dissolved. And if you see a crowd scene, people walking along the streets of New York or wherever, all the crowds, all long dissolved.

And the crowds that you see now, in a few years, gone. And those are incredible meditations when you face that. And so that's the power of facing the fact of what the Buddha called in the Pali language, anicca, impermanence.

All phenomena are impermanent, fleeting, anicca, Buddha said. Wow. And if you attach yourself and identify with any form, you will experience dukkha, suffering.

Also be translated as misery. Also can be translated as unsatisfactoriness. And so on, unhappiness.

Because, the Buddha said, there is no self in any form. That's the truth of anatta, no self. So if you're seeking a self in a form, if you identify with a form, with a body, even a thought form, or the psychological form of me, then you identify with impermanence, you're seeking a self where there's only impermanence.

And that self is the delusion. And he saw that 2,600 years ago, the truth of the

impermanence of all things. But he saw it, I mean, people knew already, but just to see it and to look, he said, look.

So those three are, to me, the most essential parts of the Buddha's teaching. Dukkha, anicca, anatta. Dukkha is the fact of suffering, if you identify with, which means seek a self, in impermanent forms.

Not just in bodies, but also in thought forms, emotional forms, and the psychological form of me. So the entire Buddha's teaching is really a disidentification from form, in order to realize the formless that underlies all that. And of course the Buddha called that emptiness, which is not a very inspiring concept.

And he did that on purpose, because if he had given us an inspiring concept, we could start believing in it. And the belief in the concept would become a substitute for the realization. Emptiness.

Emptiness. Can't do that with emptiness. And emptiness can't have a name.

What's it called? Well, it's emptiness. Oh, Jesus used the word kingdom of heaven.

It's the same thing. It's a formless realm. Of course, that is, on the one hand, you feel, ah, kingdom of heaven.

Of course, much easier to misinterpret. It's more inspiring, of course, but much easier to misinterpret and very easy to make into something that is somewhere else, which they did for a long time, and many still do. So kingdom of heaven, you go to it.

Some people are good enough, you'll go to a kingdom. In many languages, actually, the word for heaven and the word for sky are the same. So in Spanish, cielo, in German, himmel, you go to the sky.

And so although Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven cannot be, it does not appear with signs to be observed. It is not here or there. You can't say there it is.

That's what Jesus said. Nevertheless, people say the sky, the kingdom of the sky. That's the, in many languages, that's what it is.

I believe I got sidetracked a little with impermanence, but really this is what it's all about. It is a movie. It is like a movie or a dream because it is impermanent.

And so when you know that as a deep fact, when you experience the impermanence by facing it directly, then you are not so unconscious anymore that you act out the script unconsciously, continuously for the rest of your life. The script means the conditioned patterns of your mind, the reactive patterns, the thought patterns, the emotional patterns. If there is an awareness, that becomes the most important factor and then you move back into the movie because you participate in your life situation and your life with

an added factor.

You can imagine a little bit like an actor in a movie who suddenly realizes that he or she is not really the character that's being played out, but he still plays his role or her role, does his things, but the realization that he is not that will affect the role. So he's not going to stick to the script as before. The script will still be there, but changes will come into the script because the awareness brings an additional factor into it.

So whereas the script, for example, dictates that when this woman leaves him, he goes into dreadful despair and contemplates suicide, perhaps as this happens, that was the script, but suddenly in the movie, because the awareness is there, he just, instead of going to the roof and contemplating jumping off the building, he finds himself going to the beach and looking at the sea and breathing. Things change in the script suddenly. Spaciousness comes into the script where before there was...

And another thing that happens in the script, you may look at leaves moving in the wind, a little breeze coming through the tree, and if you see that in the film, isn't that amazing? Suddenly the camera goes from the script into suddenly another dimension is present in the film. Some films actually do that.

Those films where there is a spiritual dimension, I've seen films where suddenly the camera goes into and shows something that's not part of the action. It, in a way, almost takes you out of the action. It brings a depth to it.

Like the, as I mentioned before, there's a paper, piece of paper or a paper bag being tossed about in the wind in the American Beauty, that film. And you watch the amazing thing of, wow, nothing to do with the action. So a dimension comes into the script and then the movie begins to change because another dimension flows into it.

So that's the answer to now what? But so it's not enough to say, oh, well, it's all like a dream or a movie. That's not a realization.

That's only a concept in your head. For the realization, you need to deeply see the impermanence, which we just talked about, or really face it. Then something opens up within you.

And then saying that it's like a dream or a movie is not just a thought in your head. It's a realization. You're actually fully aware of the impermanent nature of all things.

And that changes the way in which you interact. A few more questions, perhaps. There are some here, many interesting questions.

Basically always the same answer. Variations. Okay, one question here.

It appears that most people will have to experience great loss in order to go through the

shift in consciousness and become present. This implies that one cannot become present through effort or through reading books, going to seminars, or taking online courses. And so regarding great loss, if Humpty Dumpty fell off his wall and broke 90% of his egoic shell, would it be true that he would then be 90% conscious?

[Speaker 23] (3:46:20 - 3:46:21)

No.

[Speaker 1] (3:46:36 - 4:09:17)

Well, maybe. But great loss does not necessarily imply awakening or shifting. It's a potential opening when you experience loss of whatever kind.

And of course, everybody sooner or later experiences loss, different kinds of loss. Death, somebody close to you dies. You lose something.

It starts with a little thing like losing your car. Now, it's unlikely that losing your car is going to free you of the ego. It's more likely that it strengthens the ego.

You suffer. So the loss very often, loss of possessions, loss of position, loss of job, happens to many people these days, loss of your investments with Mr. Madoff and so on. So Mr. Madoff has probably caused quite a few people to awaken. And as many other people suffer a lot, or in some cases both, first you suffer and then you awaken. There's a potential when there's loss because loss means a form that was important to you. And that implies that this form, whether it was a form of a possession or a position or a human being or a thing, that form was important to you because somehow you had to incorporate it into your sense of self.

It supplied you as part of your sense of who you are. In LA, of course, many people have an important relationship with their car, the car being such an important part of life here. And so even that then, loss of your car could lead to intense suffering.

Probably not enough to break the shell of the ego, but you never know. There's a story of a young man, or I don't know if he was a young man. He was traveling with his belongings in a backpack.

And somewhere in Canada, I think it was, I think he was Indian, I don't remember the details, but he lost all his belongings in his backpack and he left them somewhere. His passport, his money, everything was in there. And when he got back, he had gone to the bathroom.

And when he got back, it was gone, nothing. And that, he must have been so ready that that loss, just his passport, it's upsetting, but it can be remedied. Money, maybe a credit card, other things, gone.

And he experienced an awakening and then he became a spiritual teacher. Now, if a relatively minor loss like that does that, that means there was a high degree of readiness already. And if there's a high degree of readiness, sometimes a minor loss can be the final trigger.

And loss then potentially is an opening and it can, a chunk falls out of the ego, which is painful. It gets torn out of the egoic shell or it gets cracked and then it opens up. And that's where there's a book by Elizabeth Lesser called Broken Open.

And it's about the potential that lies behind something seemingly negative. And of course, there's also a wonderful line by, I believe it's Leonard Cohen. There is a crack, a crack in everything.

That's how the light gets through. So the crack is potentially, everything develops a crack. Every egoic shell gets cracked eventually.

But the ego is also very good at immediately going into automatic repair mode. So when an ego gets cracked by loss, there's a reaction of the ego and it mobilizes all its energy to immediately repair the crack. One way it does that is by simply complaining and making yourself into a victim.

And with that, you seal the crack because you have created an even stronger form identity than the one that you lost. If some loss makes your ego react and then you regard yourself as a victim, unfairly treated, complaining about what people did, that life did to you, that victim identity is again identification with a thought form can be a stronger ego than the one that was lost, the form that was lost. So that's a simple example.

You lose your job and then it triggers intensely a complaining negative reaction in you. You become very bitter about life. This shouldn't have happened to me.

You've worked for so many years. I've worked my butt off for these people and now what do they do? They turn your back on me.

You can see what a strong ego that creates, an identity, a complaining and resisting identity, stronger than the one that was identified with a job. And that I call an unconscious repair mechanism of the ego. And when you sometimes, you listen to people's stories when they tell you what dreadful things happened to them, then very often, there's a stronger ego post loss than the pre loss ego.

So there's certainly no guarantee that a loss will free you of the ego. The opposite can be true because the ego's repair job may be more thorough than what it was before. So...

And so we've all met people who are angry about life and all the frustrations that they have suffered. Of course, everybody suffers some kind of setbacks and failures and so

on, but they accumulate these things in their mind and form an identity around them. And blaming others, of course, or the universe or God.

If they believe in God, they blame God. And some people who don't believe in God blame God too. At least you have somebody to blame if maybe the only function God has for you is to have somebody to blame.

Or they say, how can there be a God? It's so silly. Look what happened to me.

God, I used to go to church every Sunday. Look what happened, what it did to me. There's no God.

What's this silliness? So you're really against God and it strengthens the ego enormously. And so any kind of loss would initially produce pain, but what happens then is whether the ego comes in and resists and repairs or whether the pain, at some point, maybe the pain is too much, it can't be repaired, and you come to a place of acceptance.

And the moment you come to a place of acceptance to the inevitability of what is, there is an opening. And that's the way you... And usually one way you can speak about this is to talk of a deepening of a human being becomes suddenly, there's a depth to somebody who has gone through suffering and not resisted it.

There's suddenly a depth to them that wasn't there before. There's also, you can also sense often a certain humility. They may not be totally free of ego.

In some areas of their lives, there may still be ego. But there's a certain humility that comes in, a greater ability to have empathy with others if you have suffered. Humility, which of course is absence of ego, just a more, less of a role-playing entity.

Many people are just roles, walking roles. And then that's through loss, some of that gets eroded and then something more genuine and alive is there. Not meaning that necessarily on some occasions the role-playing entity may return temporarily or even return for good and then you need some more loss.

But there's a potential in loss for a shift and the questioner also asked, well, what's the point then in reading books? For most people, it is a combination of experiencing some loss in their own lives and coming into contact with the spiritual teaching. And not infrequently, people experience loss and come into contact with the spiritual teaching at the same time or just very soon afterwards.

I've had quite several examples of that where just at the right moment, the book or the teaching came into their lives. I've also had accounts, people written to me, they said, somebody gave me a book six years ago and I opened it, it was meaningless and only two months ago, after this or that happened to me, I picked it up again and I couldn't believe it, suddenly I understood every word. And so that's a sign then that why could

you suddenly understand every word?

Something within you opened up that just wasn't the conceptual mind, it wasn't the ego, it was the deeper consciousness and it recognized the truth. And then the two together can lead to... Once a crack is there and then you come into contact with the spiritual teaching, then the spiritual teaching can really be much more effective for you.

There are also humans these days, I've encountered quite a few younger people who it seems seem to be open and they haven't experienced loss. So maybe there's a new generation coming in now, some members of which do not need to go perhaps through the suffering that the older generation like myself have to go through. There are some 20-year-olds that can see the truth and begin to live it.

And I certainly didn't know the truth at 20 and I believe if I had read *The Power of Now* at 20 it would have been meaningless to me also, even at 28. And for some people loss is all they have and there's a total shift in consciousness but either there's a high degree of readiness or there's such drastic loss accompanied by enormous suffering so much so that they can't stand the suffering anymore and on some level they surrender resistance perhaps without even anybody telling them there's a possibility of doing that. Resistance simply falls away and suddenly they are there and say, wow, what happened?

I've lost everything and I feel deeply peaceful. Don't understand that. And perhaps much later when they read a spiritual book they understand why, how.

So when loss comes let's be grateful and see if we can just accept the is-ness of it's inevitable in the world of form at some point you will encounter disaster. Well, if only in the form of your own death. Sooner or later, it's not a disaster but from the point of view of the ego it is.

Me, dead? Can't be. How can the world without me?

Can't be. And this can sometimes even a person who starts thinking about if you imagine yourself dying can lead to fear and in one case that I know of and some of you may have read about it. The intense thought of death happened to this young Indian man who was lying on his bed.

He was 16 or so and suddenly he felt he was imagined or felt he was dying. Felt what's it like to die and die? And the experience was so intense that he went through a death experience just lying on his bed after which he was never the same again and he left his home, didn't tell anybody where he was going and only years later his family discovered that he was found near a temple miles and miles away and had become a holy man and later a great spiritual teacher, Ramana Maharshi, and it all started with a 16-year-old boy lying on his bed and thinking about death and feeling what's death like?

And of course then he experienced an intense aliveness but he went deep. Something

must have such a high degree of readiness that the ego dissolved just through going through those motions of dying. That kind of death is also associated to the experience, to bring about the experience of death is also associated in some ancient initiation rites and so on.

There's a lot of wisdom in ancient cultures. There are, for example, initiation rites where you lie in a coffin. I believe even Freemasons have that although I don't know whether it actually works or how they do it.

I just remember I was giving a talk. We had rented a hall in the Freemasons Lodge in Vancouver many years ago, and before the talk I was looking for the bathroom and I opened some doors, and I opened one door. There was a dark room, and in the dark I could see there was a coffin and there was the figure of a man, but what you call a dummy or something, lying in the coffin.

Probably they use it for certain rites. I don't know what they use it for. But I do know that lying in the sarcophagus or spending time in the coffin in order to simulate a death experience, the simulation of death experience is part of many rites of initiation.

There is some wisdom in that because when you go through, even if it's simulated death, you go through a death, there is a disidentification from form. So even as you go through simulated death, if it works for you, if it's not just a ritual then everybody knows it's not the real thing, of course then it doesn't work anymore, even a simulated death can then result in disidentification from form. And so loss of whatever kind is always a potential blessing if it is not resisted internally.

Colin asks from Montreal, if there's no problem in the now, why is it said that there's an urgency for humanity to evolve? If the one consciousness is awakening spontaneously, is there really a choice involved? Thank you.

Now urgency, of course, is not to be equated with problems. There may be urgency for you to catch a plane or a train, doesn't have to be a problem. If you're running to catch a train, is that a problem?

No, you're running to catch a train. Problem arises not probably in that situation, but when you're thinking about that you might miss the train or what's going to happen if you do miss it, then the dimension of problem arises. There's nothing you can do that's not part of the totality, so when you choose to awaken, so to speak, the totality is awakening through you.

It's only a limited perspective to say I'm choosing to be present instead of being lost in my mind, I'm choosing to be present. I'm going to take my attention out of the mind and I'll be present. Who are you?

You are not separate from the totality of consciousness, and the consciousness in you is

an expression of the totality of consciousness. So when you are choosing, the totality is moving through you. It's normally choosing as such.

It's a limited perspective to feel that I am choosing, but that's fine. There's something beautiful even about limited perspectives and even helpful in the same way that to say the sun rises every morning is ultimately not true. The sun doesn't rise at all, nor does it set.

It's always there. It's only when you're in a limited perspective, you're in a particular position on the planet from where occasionally the sun becomes obscured because the planet goes round and then you don't see the sun and that moment appears as if the sun were setting and you say, oh, it's a beautiful sunset. Nothing is happening.

It's not setting at all. Nor is it rising. It never sets or rises.

When you say sunset or sunrise, it implies a limited perspective. There's an observer in a place that gives the observer a limited perspective, and yet it's a beautiful thing, sunrise and sunset. There's nothing wrong with saying, what a wonderful sunrise.

It's pointless to say, no, you are deluded. There's no sunrise. It is beautiful.

It's just as beautiful for a human being to say, I'm choosing to be present. Ultimately, there's only the one consciousness, but it loves to choose to be present through you. There are other ways of putting it.

It's not a problem.

[Speaker 9] (4:09:17 - 4:10:18)

I have a question about ignorance. I find myself to become quite ignorant. I have compassion and love and come from that place, but I don't seem to respond to what's happening around me so much because I understand it's an illusion.

And every time I see it, I just feel it is an illusion and it's okay for what it is. But now listening to you, I'm thinking maybe I should go back and be more active and participate. I used to be that way, but now I'm more like, it is what it is.

[Speaker 1] (4:10:21 - 4:15:43)

Well, I'll say a few words. Well, in any situation, prior to any action, the main factor is your state of consciousness, and any action you take arises out of a state of consciousness. If you see something that maybe suffering is being inflicted on another human being, it would be a misunderstanding of what spirituality is to say, well, this is just another illusion.

On the other hand, if you take whatever you see out in the world to be an absolute

reality and nothing else, then you get lost in trying to solve the problems of the world on the level of effect. So that is the danger of people who are activists or try to help and do things. There is a place for this one dimension that is the level of effect where you can take action and do things.

But at the same time, you need to be aware of the level of cause where the causal level of human suffering and unconsciousness, and the causal level of human suffering is in state of consciousness, and it starts with your own. Are you connected to the deeper level of who you are? That is what we always address here.

Are you connected with that? Or if you are connected with that, then what your mind calls illusion, then you truly know that this is not ultimate reality, and yet it has a relative reality. And you can take action and at the same time be connected with a deep inherent peace, an energy field of peace.

The action that you then take, spontaneous action, is imbued with that peace. And if you don't know who you are, then you're trying to solve the problems of the world exclusively on the level of form, and they cannot be solved on the level of form. The level of form is an addition, an added thing that comes.

Your state of consciousness is the primary factor in any action you take. Now, one needs to be careful with teachings that say it's all illusion. Not that it is not true, but like Advaita teachings or Causing Miracle teachings, all illusion.

On what level do you know that? Is that just a belief in your mind that tells you, oh, it's all illusion? That's not, you don't really know that.

It's actually not true as far as you are concerned. As Marianne said, you still get, when you visit your mother-in-law or whatever. You still get triggered by whoever, your mother or your mother-in-law or whoever it is.

And to say then, well, it's all illusion. Well, you don't, actually you don't seem to know that your mother-in-law is illusion, because you react as if she were absolutely real. So they don't really know it.

Whether you know that, truly know that it's illusion is determined by your state of consciousness. So when the deep peace is lacking, then you don't really know it in the depths of your being. You only know it intellectually.

And if you only know intellectually that it's all illusion, that's not the truth. Because you're fooling yourself, that it needs to be a living truth inside you. Then it becomes true for you.

So really it's only spiritual teachers who have reached that place, they say it, and they are absolutely right when they say it. And then somebody repeats it, who just hears

those words, and then thinks that's the solution to the world. It's not, it's a lie when you just repeat it as far as you are concerned, because you haven't gone to that place where you truly know it.

So that is, your primary responsibility is going to that place where you know at the deepest level. And then you can be of benefit in this world, because then any action you take is connected to a deeper level. And there's more than just the action you take, there's an entire energy field behind it that is that that changes the world.

And so the difference then between head knowledge and living knowledge.

[Speaker 3] (4:15:45 - 4:18:59)

There are monasteries, both Western and Eastern, both in the Eastern religions as well as Western orientations, where people just live in silence, monks in silence. They are probably doing as much to keep this world from blowing up in a nuclear catastrophe as is anyone. So what someone is quote-unquote doing is on the outside, does not even say.

Because just as Eckhart was just saying, if someone is acting in the realm of form, but they're bringing the old consciousness, they're actually recreating the old no matter what they're doing. And similarly, people who are quote-unquote doing nothing, but they're praying all day for all living things, are doing plenty. Books like The Course in Miracles say the world is an illusion or I need do nothing.

As Eckhart was just saying, this is extremely important. When you hear these lines out of context, that is a profound misunderstanding of A Course in Miracles or any serious spiritual teaching, to think that the conversation stops there. Because The Course in Miracles says we are to do whatever we are sent out to do.

Now, I would never presume to know, you might be in a phase where a doing of nothingness was necessary for a part of your own purification of consciousness. And just as true as that might be that you were meant to be here today to hear talk about a quickening. If you're only acting on the world of form and not addressing causal issues, then you are only creating more of a problem.

But if, just as Eckhart already said all this, if you're only dealing on the realm of cause, you're not like those monks praying for the world. You're just using, it's all an illusion anyway, so I don't have to do anything as an excuse. You're also perpetuating the problem.

So it's both and. I want to tell you one quote from Martin Luther King Jr. He said, you have very little morally persuasive power with people who can feel your underlying contempt. So that's the spiritual activist's creed.

Dear God, I want to yell and scream at this person on television. I can't stand them. And

you come to understand that your own self-righteousness, your own spiritual superiority, your own sense that you know and they don't know is the problem.

So first you pray, please help me get rid of my own craziness. The Course in Miracles says the primary work of the miracle worker is to accept the atonement for himself. Dear God, I really believe I'm better than they are, smarter than they are, and if only they were gone, the country would be fine.

Dear God, heal me. Right? But then the issue is when you're flat on that, you won't feel moved to just sit there.

You will, when and to the extent to which it is your assignment, do that which you are called to do if you are called to do it, but just as Eckhart was saying, you will do it from a different place.

[Speaker 9] (4:19:00 - 4:19:41)

So the answer is both and, isn't it? Everything seems to be always is one thing yet is another. It seems that...

Actually, it's really funny because you say something but the opposite is truth as well. So it kind of contradicts everything and life contradicts itself. Give us an example.

Yes, I can be out there active and fight and that would be great and it will be beneficial for the energy of this planet and mine. Yet if I don't and just sit in peace and love and just be still, it's the same.

[Speaker 3] (4:19:41 - 4:21:09)

No, if you go out there and you fight, you will only be temporarily managing an effect. It will only be an allopathic suppression of the symptoms. The issue is how much time did you spend in the presence that morning?

Did you meditate and prepare inwardly before you went? And then if you went, you might have gone to the rally, but you wouldn't be coming to fight. You would be coming to be the presence in the midst of this chaos.

You would come in a whole different way. And that is what the world needs now. These are illusions, but there's a part in The Course in Miracles where it talks about how you could take a spiritual teaching, you could take the power of now.

It's a book, it's a form, it's an illusion, but it's an illusion that leads beyond illusion. So The Course in Miracles talks about the highest level of thinking of which the ego is capable. It's still the ego's world, we're bodies, we're talking, but it's the highest level of thinking of ego which ultimately will lead us.

So I think it's both and. You pray, you meditate, then you show up if you feel moved to show up, but you will show up emanating something much more profound and causal than just, well, man, I'm angry, which means you're just part of the problem. You're as much a hawk as they are.

[Speaker 1] (4:21:11 - 4:24:23)

Or take an example, let's say, very often whenever humans come together in institutions and companies, they set the enormous amount of conflict that's generated. Let's say there's a committee meeting. There's conflict, I mean, not only where you might expect conflict in the big financial institutions.

There's the same amount of conflict when egos come together in hospital administrations, churches, church administration, and so on. So let's say you are there at a committee meeting where everybody is energized egoically, and in other words, it's quite insane, and your job is to embody, before you even think of what you are going to say or what you want, prior to all that, your job is to embody a different state of consciousness as you sit there. That comes first.

It doesn't, what you want to happen or your point of view, you can forget about it for the time being. First is, what is my state of consciousness? Are you there as another agitated egoic presence and saying things should be done the spiritual way?

I totally disagree with everybody. Or do you embody the presence? And then you sit there and you begin to listen to all the people discussing things without saying, oh, you're all so ignorant.

You should be, without the judgments of the mind, you simply watch, and you're there as a still, alert presence. And you watch. And then you may find at some point words may come out of your mouth and you say something.

It will be totally different energy from the energy that these people are putting out. But it's not that you are saying, no, I'm going to show you the right energy. No, it doesn't.

It comes out of presence. Words that come out of presence are not, they don't generate more confrontation and human unconsciousness. And it may well be that suddenly people listen.

But that's the result. You're not attached to the result. And you cannot predict what will come out of your mouth.

Maybe nothing will come out of your mouth and you will just be there. And perhaps the very fact that there's one human being who holds the presence might change what these people say or do in the room. It could happen.

It doesn't matter, but that your primary responsibility is embodying a different state of consciousness. Whether action comes out of that, words come out of that is secondary. So that really is, we've all had experiences of how dysfunctional all these places are where egos come together.

Where egos come together, it cannot not be dysfunctional.

[Speaker 3] (4:24:24 - 4:26:04)

Now, this is, you know, these inquiries are so endlessly fascinating because once you're on that level of pure consciousness or reality with a capital R, you are in the realm where there is no time or space. So when you are in that meeting of the hospital administration in Vancouver and you go into pure consciousness, which, by the way, cannot but affect the people in the room, in ways that you will never know, there could be a suicide bomber somewhere who says, I'm not going to do it. Literally.

There could be a soldier somewhere who says, I'm putting my gun down. So once we're in that realm of pure consciousness, we're in the one mind. That's the esoteric meaning of the line.

There is only one begotten son means we're all in. So it is not just as you were saying, which is, well, if where you find yourself is the hospital administration meeting, that's your assignment today. But it's also that place where spirituality intersects, spiritual practice intersecting global activism, because you actually are affecting the entire globe and contributing to that 51%.

But also affect you have no idea where this might be. We know that when the butterfly flaps its wings in this southern tip of the planet, that it affects the wind currents at the North Pole. We know that this is the same on the level of consciousness.

So you are working on the world if you're working on yourself deeply. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (4:26:07 - 4:26:26)

And you're very powerful. In that sense, you are very powerful. The power, the wonderful quote that you're the most famous quote from Marianne, which is usually attributed to Nelson Mandela.

But it's actually by Marianne, which is deep.

[Speaker 3] (4:26:26 - 4:26:43)

It's from it's from a return to love. Of course, it's of course, content. Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our

darkness that most frightens us. And then I'm the only person I know who doesn't have the rest of it memorized.

[Speaker 1] (4:26:47 - 4:27:00)

It's lovely. Thank you. Now, I believe that did you say Marianne needs to go soon?

Yeah. So let's thank her for being here. A wonderful, valuable, incredible addition.

[Speaker 3] (4:27:00 - 4:27:01)

Thank you so much. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (4:27:01 - 4:27:02)

Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (4:27:02 - 4:27:03)

Thank you.

[Speaker 22] (4:27:04 - 4:27:08)

Thank you. Great honor. Great honor.

God bless you.

[Speaker 1] (4:27:24 - 5:01:16)

We have a few questions. I will read one, the first question from the paper, which was the question that most people seem to be interested in. And then we'll have some other popular questions, spoken questions from people that are here, some of you.

So, if in the end there's no separate person, why do we feel drawn towards an individual and personal expression of love? If we are all one consciousness, what of the personal love that we feel for individuals? What place does the individual love for one person take in this larger picture?

By the way, it's a little cold here, so we can do what the Tibetan meditators do, generate heat in the body by putting attention into the body. Now, love, true love, is transcendental. And without recognition of the formless within yourself, there can be no true love, transcendental love.

Because if you cannot recognize the formless in yourself, you cannot recognize yourself in the other. And the recognition of the other as yourself, in essence, not the form, is true love. So, as long as the conditioned mind operates and you are completely identified with it, there's no true love.

There may be substitutes, things that are called love but are not true love. For example, falling in love. Falling in love, perhaps most of us have experienced it.

Maybe one or two at this moment are in love, have fallen in love. And those who have experienced it have also experienced falling out of love. We need to remember to understand true love and other forms of so-called love that we are in the relative as form and in the absolute as formless consciousness.

The two dimensions that the human being embodies as a human and the being. The human being form, the being being formless and timeless consciousness itself. And it sometimes happens that the form is drawn to certain, has an affinity with other forms.

It could happen for a number of reasons. One being that this form has come out of another form called your mother. And so there is an affinity of this form with that other form.

So you have a love towards your mother that could be called personal. And your mother has a love towards you that could be called personal. Another aspect of affinity with another form is, of course, male-female.

Could also be male-male, female-female. But let's talk for a moment about male-female. You are drawn to another body, sexual, sometimes called love.

Especially if the sexual act is denied for long enough, it's more likely to develop into obsessive love. So much so that in cultures where you could not have sex until you were married, people were going to be falling in love could be a huge thing and lead to suicide. And if it was not reciprocated.

So naturally there is an affinity of the male-female. The incompleteness of this form, the primary incompleteness of this form, is of course that you are either a man or a woman. So the oneness has become the duality of male-female, which you even have with animals and even plants.

Male-female duality. So the pull towards the other is an attempt to find wholeness, completeness, fulfillment through the opposite polarity. In an attempt to find that wonderful, the oneness, to get back to the one that lies at the basis of the attraction.

And again it's to do with form. Because on the level of form you are not whole. You are one half of the whole.

One half of humanity is male, the other half of humanity is female, roughly. If you are female and you don't like male, or you are male and you are complaining about females and you dislike or complain about one half of humanity, the other half. So you have the attraction for the other.

Then there may be finding certain qualities in another human being that resonate with certain qualities in yourself, certain frequencies in yourself, emotional. Or if they don't resonate, it may be the opposite that you feel drawn to. So if you are a very peaceful person, maybe you feel drawn to a dramatic person.

Could happen. Or a dramatic person feels drawn to a person who is very peaceful. And again hoping for some completion there.

So you can have this affinity with another form, which would be called personal love. Now if personal love is all that there is, no matter whether it's on the level of sexuality or the emotional level between male-female or male-male, female-female or the emotional love between parents and children. Again, there is this strong link, the affinity, because this body has come out of another body.

It's the product of two bodies coming together. So naturally there is love towards your parents and the parents love towards their children. And yet, this is all fine, but if the vital question is, is that all there is?

If the personal affinity or pull towards another human being is all there is, then what's missing is the transcendental dimension of the formless, which is where true love arises. Is that part of the personal love or is the personal level all that there is? That determines whether that so-called love is going to turn into something painful eventually and frustrating or die, or whether there is a deepening.

So even though, for example, there may be an attraction that is initially sexual between two humans, if they start living together, this cannot endure for that long and be the fulfillment of the relationship. At some point, sexual-emotional needs to deepen and the transcendental dimension needs to somehow come, if only to some extent, needs to come in if the relationship is to deepen and true love is going to shine through the personal. So the important thing is, is the true love which generates, which emanates from the timeless, non-formal dimension of who you are, is that shining through the personal love that is to do with affinity of forms?

If it is not, there is complete identification with form and complete identification with form is ultimately ego. And so it may be it's a search for love, but you'll never really find it. Many times you may think that's it in relationships and you find, no, no, that wasn't it.

This was the person who was going to be the one. Or no. After living together for a little while, you realize, I may have made, that was a mistake.

I was completely deluded. Or the mind invents some other story and says, he or she completely deceived me. Not knowing that you deceived yourself.

He completely deceived me, misled me. He made me believe or she made me believe that she loved me and didn't love me at all. Was going to bring me happiness.

He promised me happiness. Didn't happen. And even in parent-children, which is very deep bond on the level of form, a very close bond.

And even if the transcendental dimension does not shine through, eventually, sooner or later, even the love between children and parents turns into something else. And this is why so many people have very problematic relationships with their parents. Because they have egos.

If there's only form, yes, you feel a strong pull. You go to them, you need something from them which they can't give you. And yet you go back again and again and all you get is the same old reactions.

And so a lot of unhappiness is there when there is a bond, an affinity between two human beings without the transcendental dimension shining through. Then no matter how close the bond is, it will be a form of suffering. So in any relationship, even though some relationships may start as purely form-based, such as in sexuality, it can happen that the other dimension comes in after a while, perhaps only after a lot of problems and perhaps you get close to a breakup, and then suddenly there is a deepening and you are able to bring in space.

The key word then is, is there space in this relationship? Inner space, a sense of spaciousness. Or is all there is thoughts and emotions?

Thoughts and emotions. Is that all there is? That's a dreadful prison to inhabit.

If you live with a person and all you have is thoughts and emotions, then, of course, occasionally you're okay just because you're tired of fighting. And then again comes continuous friction, disagreement, stuff, stuff. And even people who've been into alternative therapies, and so sometimes even after years they still say, so much stuff coming up in my relationship, so much stuff coming up.

Of course, there's no end to the stuff. Because new stuff is generated continuously. And so, yes, we need to acknowledge, yes, there are personal affinities, but in themselves never ultimately fulfilling, and more often than not, a source of suffering.

So love becomes a source of suffering, the so-called love, when the transcendental is missing. So how does the transcendent dimension come in? By being spacious with the other, which essentially means that you access in yourself the stillness while you look at the other, while you listen to the other, or if it's a close relationship, while you touch the other.

Just stillness, not mental noise, not emotional waves. Doesn't mean that there cannot be emotions or thoughts, but there is something else present in the relationship. That spaciousness.

And that applies not just to close personal relationships that are called love relationships. It applies also to more superficial relationships at work. Relationships that are short, when you just meet a person for a brief time because you've come back together on a plane or whatever.

It's a brief or your transaction, business transaction with somebody. There are many kinds of relationships that are not love relationships, and yet even there is there space. Any human relationship, the question is, is there space?

So I could use that as a little mantra in your... It's a thought, of course. It's a pointer.

It's a pointer beyond itself. Is there space in this relationship? Okay.

Essentially then, let's put it bluntly, space means it's a space when thought becomes unimportant, when any judgment of your mind and even an emotion becomes unimportant, when something deeper is there. Awareness, stillness, alert, alive, stillness, a space. It's amazing after you've...

I observe it often when people have lived together. The other is no longer acknowledged in daily life because there's so many things to... In most people, there's so much to do.

Then, let's say, the other wakes... You wake up in the morning and then... Is there a moment where you acknowledge the presence of the other?

It doesn't have to be long. Or the person comes home from work. Or it's immediately the mind...

Are you saying, did you remember to do that? Or you know what we have to do. They've just got up and you haven't even acknowledged the presence of the other.

You know what we have to do now. Consumed by thought. Or you say, you know what you said to me last night?

I've been thinking about it. I really resent that. You were fine last night before you started thinking about it, but now you've been thinking about it and I feel a lot of resentment now towards you.

Too much thinking. Too little presence. Yes, emotions will come up.

And then again, there is a possibility of being present with an emotion, so that the emotion does not have you in its grasp, but is simply there in the space of who you are. Yes, I can feel that wave of emotion. Perhaps it's anger.

Maybe something the person said or failed to say. Emotions, if you don't overdo it, anything you overdo is no longer helpful. So you can talk about an emotion.

I can feel this emotion at this moment. And then often it passes. If you do not fuel it with your thoughts, you just acknowledge it.

If you fuel the emotion with your thoughts, then there is a vicious circle. The emotion then generates more thoughts and the thoughts generate more emotion. It's actually the most wonderful thing if you can be there for the other as space rather than as a person because the person is a form.

Now, when I say that, you need to experience being here as space at this very moment. At this very moment, you can either be here as a person or you can be here also. Of course, the person is there anyway.

The body is not going to dissolve right now, so you're safe. The body is here and stays in this chair. That's fine.

Also, you have a past. It's not going to go away. You remember your name and what happened to you last year and 10 years ago.

You can even remember your ex-husband or your ex-wife. All that is still there. It's not going to be.

And yet, you don't have to carry that around with you, the ability to step out of the personal dimension into the dimension of the present moment of presence, which has nothing to do with your past, and be alert and present and see that your identity is not from your past story, but who you truly are is the alert presence that is inseparable from the present moment. Now, that's who you are. This, which has no name and no form, is simply...

You can't really call it anything, although we do because we have to use little pointers. You are that, the alert stillness. You are not a person.

That's only the form, because that thing is going to go quite soon. Whether it's next year or in 40 years' time, it'll be soon. And when death comes, it'll be today.

So, as much as possible, be here with another human, or here, as you said, here, as a presence. You are a presence here, or the presence, and only your secondary identity, the relative identity, you're a person with a past. Now, most people derive their identity from their past, which is their thoughts.

And if you can now derive your identity from consciousness itself, that means you have transcended the person. And if you can live your life in a way that the transcendent can shine through it, even through the personal realm into this world, then that is the fulfillment of your destiny. It's bringing that in, and that is loving, really.

Another word for it is to be here as a loving being. And you then love whatever you

encounter, because there is a resonance, not just the affinity of the personal with another form, which is very selective, but now there is a resonance with all life, not just a selection of a few good-looking men or women, or my mom or dad, or whatever. An all-embracing sense of non-separateness with life, so that it sounds almost a little weird.

I sometimes find myself picking up an object and then simply appreciate its presence, its being. It could be anything. It could even be a toothpaste or a pen.

It doesn't have to be anything special. And it comes naturally to simply appreciate the beingness of each, not perhaps continuously, because you would become a little weird if you went around. Or people might think you've taken something.

But it is that when there's the spaciousness, there's love emanates. And what is love again? The recognition of your oneness with all life.

And life is everything, animate, inanimate. Ultimately, there are no inanimate things, because if you look deeply enough into so-called inanimate things, you find life, vibrant life. Every physicist can tell you that.

If you go deep enough into a stone, you find vibrant life. And it surrounds you. Now, you no longer know that you're surrounded by the wonder of forms because the transcendent dimension isn't there, so you cannot see that these are all part of who you are.

And so the love isn't there, which means that what is lacking is the sense of oneness. So the restoration of that, I'm saying restoration, assuming that at some point humans, before they developed, they perhaps lived in that state of oneness and then lost it. We're destined to lose it, and we are now destined to regain it at a deeper level.

Because when you've never lost it, you don't even know that you have it. You don't appreciate it. So we're talking about love, then, is not just between two human beings, or that's beautiful, and it's very different from what the ego tells you it is.

There's no neediness at all. It's an outflowing, you could say, rather than a wanting or needing. There's so much beauty around you, and not just where one conventionally would look for beauty in a flower.

Of course, it's there, supreme beauty, but even in places where habitually you would not be looking for beauty. There's a beautiful scene. Some films, I gave a talk a while ago about the transcendent dimension in movies, which occasionally is there, and it's wonderful.

I always look out for this when I see a movie or read a novel. Is there some presence of the transcendent dimension there or not? Or is every character in this movie completely trapped in their form identity and in their ego?

Which, of course, is the case in many movies, and perhaps people like to see them, because then they see, oh, they live just like me. But there was, for example, in the film American Beauty, which came some years ago, one of the characters walks around, this young man, for those who have seen American Beauty, walks around with a little film camera. And that, to me, whether the director meant this to be so or whether it's something that happened accidentally, I don't know.

But to me, that puts the viewer of the movie in the position of awareness, because he goes around passively recording everything. And so when you see that in the film, you become the aware witness, because the camera is the symbol for the witness. And then there's one scene when there's a, I think it's a plastic bag or paper bag being tossed about in the wind, and he films that.

And the commenter in the background says, how beautiful that is, just that movement. And that's a transcendent moment when the storyline of the film, which of course is problematic, because otherwise there would be no film, the storyline of the film suddenly, it's like it opens up. And somebody starts watching a piece of paper or paper bag being tossed about in the wind and says, how beautiful.

That is a breakthrough of the transcendent dimension. And it's wonderful when you see that in a movie. Your life is similar, you have your life situation, but is there an eruption of the transcendent there?

Otherwise, it gets more and more heavy, your life, without that, or stagnant, or angry, or irritated. And that's really, we're talking about love, because when you see beauty in everything, that appreciation of everything around you is a form of love, it is love. So I sometimes, all manifestations of life are really the play of life around you, which includes even the traffic.

The mind says, dreadful, this traffic. Well, it's a manifestation of the universe is playing around with, it's producing many, many manifestations of life. And if you are rooted in the transcendent, you can find beauty even in the headlights of cars, light, and the movement of people, just to watch with love, to see all the infinite manifestations of the human form.

So many billions of humans on the planet, they're all not, well, there are certain patterns that are very similar inside the mind, but they're all a bit different. No person is exactly, so this is what life produces, these forms. But you can appreciate the beauty of it only from the dimension of the formless in yourself.

Then the forms can be appreciated. Without that, without the space within, either the forms, well, you will want some of these forms that you see, or you will be fearful, whether the form comes in the form of a human being, or situation, or place, whatever. There cannot be true appreciation.

And even that's connected with gratitude, which is a word that is important, but people don't think, don't know what that is. Gratitude is simply an appreciation for what is, in whatever form, loving it. Not needing it, loving it.

[Speaker 19] (5:01:58 - 5:03:04)

It's a question about personal and romantic love. If one is in the surrendered state of consciousness, I've heard teachings from my own experience and from just reading. With romantic love, there can be, I need you, behavioral expectations.

And then there's like the selfless kind of love, where there are no behavioral expectations, and you still love the person. My question is, if you're in the surrendered state of consciousness, if you're completely surrendered to what is, do you still have that kind of selfless love for a specific person romantically? Or does that kind of dissolve, or is it just only the universal, which is wonderful, the universal love?

It's amazing. Wow, you know? But can you also have that specific kind of love for someone?

Okay, thank you.

[Speaker 1] (5:03:07 - 5:12:43)

So the question, you're basically asking, would you then love everybody equally, so there would not be one person singled out as special, as the Course in Miracles calls it, special relationship, which the Course in Miracles says, of course, it's of the ego, to single one out as special. Now, if you single one out as special, and what you see in the other is the form only, and you're attached to the form, which doesn't just mean the physical form, of course, that's an important part of it, because that is part of the sexuality and all that, which is part of the attraction, but it also includes the psychological form of the other, who you think that person is, their psychological makeup, how they behave and speak and act, that is also form, that's the psychological form, and there can be strong attachment to those aspects, both the physical come together with the psychological, which includes also emotions, there's an emotional link also there, and those coming, when they all come together, you fall in love, and aptly it's called fall, because it's a fall in consciousness, but, but, but that's okay, if that's what you experience, then that life wants you to experience that, it's part of your learning, that fall in consciousness, now it's not immediately, of course, experienced as a fall, it's experienced as a high, and only afterwards do you realize, oh, that was a fall, that was a fall, and afterwards can be after a year, it can be after three months, it can be after the honeymoon, it can be soon after you move in together, so, and then the suffering starts, what before was the love, now becomes the suffering, and then for a while it can happen that you fluctuate, for the next year or two or three, between still feeling the love and the suffering, and then usually it comes to an end after a while, or you compromise, and for some other reason stay

together, so that's the, now if you are able to feel in the other, well, first of all in yourself, that which is beyond form, the essence, the stillness, the presence, whatever we want to call it, and by sensing it in yourself and being it, then you recognize it in another, and that recognition, that in the space of stillness is true love, which doesn't need the other, because the other only reflects to you who you are, but even there it can happen that the form of the other, because you are not just the formless, temporarily you are also the form, temporarily you are either a man or a woman, temporarily you have this body, and this form, this man or this woman, and this body and the emotional field may find a certain resonance with, on different levels, be it sexual, emotional, psychological levels, a certain resonance with the other form, and that resonance, that is what in the unenlightened romantic love makes up the entire relationship, but now when you are, when you know who you are in your essence, all those factors are still there, but they do not make up the entire relationship beyond the resonance between the sexual or emotional or physical resonance, there's a deeper level present, so you can go through the motions of romantic love with the transcendent level also present in yourself and recognizing it in the other, so romantic love may, after a while, of course, for the relationship to be truly deep, in any relationship, some transcendent element has to be there because it's not going to last otherwise, it doesn't mean necessarily that people need to be totally awake already, totally awake knowing who they are, but some element of the formless must be there eventually in the relationship for the relationship to survive and be a true relationship, otherwise all you have left in the relationship is your judgments about the other and physical attraction and just mind, emotional, and that's ultimately, it's not enough, it's not enough, the added element, the transcendent element needs to be there, and if the transcendent is there, you can be quite content even without the romantic relationship, you no longer say, I need that, when it's there, it's beautiful, but you don't need that, yeah, pull, so the mind, it is often in relationships, the mind prevents the deeper level, the transcendent level from arising in the relationship, so the mind destroys the relationship, identification with the story in the mind, which is about yourself and the other obscures love, it might even say love, well, it's no such thing as love, I read a lovely, in a novel last year by a British writer, it was Mac Ewan, he's a well-known contemporary writer, Ian Mac Ewan, and he wrote this book about, it's called *On Chesil Beach*, it's about two young people falling in love in England in the 50s, and these two young people, they feel the pull towards each other and they begin to fall in love, but sexually they are completely repressed and very fearful, it's in the 50s, so the revolution hasn't happened yet about sex, but they're both extremely fearful about sex, and then they get married and their first night, they stay in a bed and breakfast near Chesil Beach in the south of England and they're trying to have sex for the first time and it's a disaster, dreadful disaster, and she is so shocked, she runs out of the room to the beach, oh, they don't realize it's actually quite funny, I don't explain what disaster, you can probably imagine it, so she runs out and the next day, so they don't see each other that night, that's their honeymoon, their wedding night, and the next day he goes to the beach, Chesil Beach, and she sees she's walking on the beach,

they start talking to each other, and both feel the pull is still there, but both their minds are bringing up stories why it's not possible, it's dreadful, they are projecting things onto the other, what she is, and so the pull is there, but they both create stories in their minds that cuts them off from the other, and they separate, and then they spend the rest of their lives doing other things, and the rest of their lives in the novel is compressed to five or six pages, and that shows how destructive the mind can be of true relationship, how the mind imposes interpretations on the other, that are total fictions, but there's so much, as Don Miguel Ruiz would say, there's so much faith in these fictions, that it's an impossibility for the human being to see what the mind is creating is a fictitious judgment that creates a barrier between yourself and the other. This writer is not spiritual at all, he just observed human nature, and he presented it, and that is the ultimate lesson is spiritual.

[Speaker 22] (5:12:43 - 5:12:46)

Thank you very much.

[Speaker 1] (5:13:24 - 5:21:14)

A written question. Heather from San Bernardino. I'm a physician that works in an urgent care.

Every day I begin with meditation, and within an hour on my job, I have dissolved into a mental medical construct. Each patient has a story that I listen to, and with each 15 minute appointment, I grow further and further away from a connection with spirit. Any insight?

One important word here perhaps is, yes, I begin with meditation, that's wonderful, you begin with stillness, and then what happens within an hour, that's lost, each patient comes for about 15 minutes, and each patient has a story that I listen to. With each 15 minute appointment, I grow further and further away from a connection with spirit. And perhaps the answer here lies in the way in which you listen to the patients.

If the attention is excessively on the words, or on the story that they're telling you, of course you listen to the words or the story, yes. But where is the main part of your attention? Is the main part of your attention on the story or the words?

Is the main part of your attention on what it is that the patient needs, that you have reference in your knowledge? What is the medication or the treatment that is most appropriate? Is this operating in your mind while you listen?

Because it seems that you are losing presence through the listening, and that seems to suggest that there isn't the right kind of listening yet happening in you, whereas listening itself can be the greatest meditation. And then you will not lose presence, presence will deepen. And we talked about that previously, so I'll mention it again.

The conscious listening, what is of primary importance when there is true conscious listening, is not the words that are being spoken. Yes, they are being heard, that's true. But that is not the main part of your attention.

The main part of your attention is also not reference to your own mind to see what it is that you can do in this situation, and some conscious, okay, what do I have to do? What's the best way to help this person? By the way, if anybody, you don't have to be a physician, anybody who listens to somebody who is telling you their problems, or listen to somebody who is close to death, you're sitting close to death, the mistake that many people make then is to think, okay, I have to say something helpful, what can I say that's helpful?

And then they're trying to say something helpful. You don't need to say anything helpful, you need to be there, your attention needs to be fully in the act of listening. Then you realize that the most healing thing, the most powerful thing in this human interaction is not the words that are being spoken, and it's not the thoughts that you are thinking, those things may still also happen.

But the most important part is the energy field of listening. The energy field of listening is the conscious attention, is the space of consciousness. And it is the moment you truly listen to someone that arises, and that elevates the human interaction into something much deeper, more profound than it would otherwise be.

It comes through you, and often it draws also the other person into a different state of consciousness. And if it doesn't, something within them will still respond. It changes the interaction, and you don't become depleted, because your attention is not on the story, the story is peripheral.

Yes, you listen to the words, but it is peripheral, and your thoughts are also peripheral. Yes, some thoughts, particularly if you are a physician, after you've listened for 10, 15 minutes, of course you will, some thoughts may arise, and then you'll know this is the treatment that is needed. We have a wonderful physician here in the room who works with cancer patients, and I know you're doing wonderful work, and I know that this is how you work with people, and so you're bringing great blessing to people.

Thank you. But this is exceptional still in our civilization. It's exceptional, but it will happen more and more.

The power of listening, the power of... So you will then see, instead of becoming depleted, you become empowered through the work that you do. Don't lose yourself in the words when you listen.

Don't lose yourself in the story. Don't lose yourself in excessive thinking about what it is you can do. The energy field of presence is the important thing in listening, the arising

presence.

It's an actual power. You can almost feel it that comes in through you, through this form. And that's the art of listening.

So listening is something sacred. It's a sacred thing, really, to truly listen, and it's the greatest gift you can give to another human being, ultimately there is no other, but let's put it that way. The greatest gift you can give is to truly bring that field of listening to another.

What gift could be greater than that? Giving them your fullest attention, not the concentrated attention, not that kind of attention that goes, now what are you really talking about? Now you're getting lost in the words.

What do you mean? You can still ask questions, yes, but it's not that kind of attention, it's this kind of attention that opens up, not the concentrated, not concentration. Open.

What in Zen is called, my Japanese is not very good, chikantaza or something like that, which means choiceless attention, just complete open, completely open attention.

[Speaker 7] (5:21:43 - 5:22:37)

Thank you. Hi, Eckhart. Years ago I picked up your book in a bookstore and I was sharing with someone, immediately I noticed a sense of stillness.

And it's been developing, sometimes it's bigger than me and I'm just this little tiny thing, and other times I'm like, I've never felt stillness in my life. What's been going on recently is that I'm discovering the emotional storms that bothered me don't bother me so much anymore. The pain body is not, I can see it when it happens, and sometimes if it's too fast, I see where it went.

But I'm discovering these new things, like egoic compulsions that I didn't have before. And I'm like, is this a good thing that I'm noticing these?

[Speaker 1] (5:22:39 - 5:22:41)

Can we have an example?

[Speaker 7] (5:22:42 - 5:23:25)

Usually in relation to other people. I'm in a relationship, I think that's where it started. I'm in a relationship and I feel the need to be right, the need to be heard.

I've been in relationships before, I never experienced that. Maybe I was lost in the pain, I don't know, but I didn't experience that. And now it's so strong when it happens, and it doesn't feel like mine, it doesn't feel like what the pain felt like.

And it takes me over, and then I don't feel good afterwards.

[Speaker 1] (5:23:27 - 5:23:34)

So it's in arguments and so on, being taken over by the energy, needing to be right?

[Speaker 7] (5:23:34 - 5:23:56)

I don't engage in it, but I feel it. Like I feel this thing rising in me, and I'm like, what's going on? I don't engage in it, but it's there.

So I've read that sometimes when you move along the path and new things come up, I'm like, is this something new? Did I have these all along?

[Speaker 1] (5:23:58 - 5:30:33)

Sometimes with awareness you become aware of things that before were unconscious, and then it looks as if you were becoming more egoic than before. But the reason is that the egoic patterns rise to consciousness, and they're suddenly seen. And so often I get people ask the question, say, it seems I'm becoming more egoic as awareness grows.

But usually the answer is no, you're beginning to see all the aspects of your ego that before you didn't even know were there. The essence of ego is you don't know. You identify so much with the reaction of the patterns that you become it.

So the people with the biggest egos have never even heard of ego. And if you said you have a huge ego, say, what do you mean, what ego? So if you know that you have an ego and occasionally you see it in action, that means it's already becoming conscious, not the ego, but the consciousness is rising.

And the ego is no more than a conditioned pattern in the mind, in the mental emotional field. And the conditioned pattern wants to take you over. It wants you to identify with it.

It wants to become you. It wants to become the self, the egoic self. It's like an entity.

There's lots of little energetic entities living in us. Every thought is an entity. Every emotion is an entity.

And so the ego is an energy field. Also, it doesn't want to go. But a relationship, a partner is a good opportunity for observing your ego, because if you lived alone, you could be under the delusion that you don't have an ego anymore.

If it's not being challenged, the partner brings it out. That's the good thing about it. And so don't bottle it in.

And if your partner is conscious enough, you can ask, you can explain that you would like to express to him or her that when the ego comes up or the pain body comes up, you

can point it out to the other. When you said that, I suddenly, now I feel this reaction. And this is what I feel right now.

If you can point out to the other what you are feeling, and he or she can point it out to you what they are feeling, it's a huge step forward. If you can make it, rather than I'm trying to keep it down or simply acting it out blindly, find the middle way. Say, I feel really angry when you said that.

I suddenly felt very angry. Don't say you made me angry, because that's not true. I made myself angry, but your comment was the trigger through which I made myself angry.

So verbalize it. That brings it to the light of consciousness, whatever you feel. Have an agreement that you're going to be very open and just express what you feel.

Be very conscious of accusing and blaming and needing to be right, which one of the most deep-seated ego patterns is the unconscious need to be right. There have been, some of you may observe, huge arguments can develop over the tiniest thing, even just an abstract thing. No, this is how it is.

No, the moon is 300,000 kilometers from the earth. No, it's not. It's 3 million kilometers from the earth.

No, I'm right. How dare you? Why do you always want to know better?

Ego comes in, and immediately a huge argument, out of nothing, sometimes after 20 minutes, they say, how did this all start? So bring it up if your partner is conscious enough and talk about it, look at it. And at other times, you may find a reaction that comes, and when you see it, it may subside when there's enough presence.

You see it, it subsides. Spacious awareness is the main thing in the relationship. I call it really space in the relationship.

The ability to be present with the other, not always verbalizing it from time to time is good, but more important is to be spacious with the other. When you listen to the other, just listen. Really put into practice the saying, I'm listening, I hear what you're saying, I'm hearing.

It's not just as a verbal thing that one says, but truly put it into practice, truly hear what the other is saying. And then what the other is saying becomes secondary. Yes, you're listening to the words, but more important is the energy field that's behind the listening, which is presence.

So when you're listening to the other, the most important thing is the listening presence in you that comes through you, and that transforms the relationship at that moment. If

both can have that, then they can have, when the other loses presence, the other one can be present for them. So they can help rather than energize, stimulating the other's unconsciousness, they can help them in presence.

Wonderful practice. Yes, it's challenging, but that's fine. So enjoy the challenge of relationship.

[Speaker 22] (5:30:51 - 5:30:54)

I have a question about effort.

[Speaker 7] (5:30:55 - 5:31:32)

I have had some experiences in my life that I would say I was truly awake, and I can't see how they ever related to anything I have ever tried to do to be awake. And then I have spent quite a bit of time actually trying to awaken, trying to be there, and sometimes it actually works for a short while, and then the thoughts come back in. But what I'd really like to find are those moments when I'm really awake, and I wondered if they have anything to do with effort.

[Speaker 1] (5:31:33 - 5:31:34)

Effort.

[Speaker 7] (5:31:34 - 5:31:36)

As opposed to grace.

[Speaker 1] (5:31:36 - 5:39:15)

Ah, yes, okay. If you approach it from saying, I'm trying to awaken, that in a way you have already created a problem because you're trying, you're trying to get somewhere called the awakened state. Making an effort also, in a way you've already created a problem.

Perhaps the quickest way one could say to the awakened state is to live in acceptance of the present moment as it is. Now, you can't try to do that. You either accept or you don't.

And accepting is not really an effort. The effort is not accepting. And the effort is habitual and normal and therefore not recognized as an effort.

Effort is how most people live continuously, one way or another. And so that when they try, when they come into spiritual practice, that habit stays with them. But there is no effort in accepting this moment as it is.

But if you are in resistance to this moment, that's an effort. But resistance is so habitual that it looks normal and as if it were no effort. One is not aware that it is an effort.

And the easy way looks difficult. This is what the ego has done, that what is difficult looks normal and easy almost, and what is in reality easy looks very difficult. So, am I able to accept this moment as it is?

You can ask this. Am I willing? Am I willing to accept this, this moment?

Yes. No effort. Then you've opened the door to grace.

It's your contribution. All you need to do is open the door and then grace comes when it will. That's all.

So to open the door, no effort is really needed. I'm willing to say yes to the present moment as it is. Then grace is, which is an influx of something that comes from a deeper place than the person, but is not separate from who you are, comes in through that open door.

If you live in resistance to what is, grace can't really come in. It would like to, but it can't. So your contribution is very simple and doesn't really require effort.

Just as the Course in Miracles puts it, a little willingness, just a little willingness. Am I willing to say yes to the now? That's the end of effort.

And of course you can approach it from a different perspective or a different angle. I can say, am I able to be still now? Can I become still by making an effort to be still?

Don't think so. You could create perhaps an artificial state of stillness by contracting your body and stop breathing, hoping that at the same time your mind will also stop. And you may have a little bit of success for a few seconds, and then the mind will be even more active than before.

I can't do it. You see, it doesn't work. So to become still, again, if you approach it as if it were something that you have to do or to bring about, then it creates effort and it doesn't work.

To become still, you need to simply go with your attention to the stillness. It's already there underneath the thinking. You're already still.

You may not know it, but you're already still. The vastness is already there underneath the mental noise. So you take some attention there.

There's no effort really in that. You're already still underneath the thinking. No effort.

Whenever it appears that you have to make an effort, that's not the right approach. So effort doesn't get you there. But sometimes when you can, when you access that presence, stillness, presence, presence, there's an intensity there that is not effort, but it could be misinterpreted as if it were an effort, an intensity of presence like now.

There's no effort because effort means you're not quite there yet. You are there. So to hold the stillness, there's an intensity sometimes that arises, and that's not effort.

It's just intensity of consciousness. You turn up the light. No effort.

So give up all effort and take the effortless way. Open the door. The easiest is probably the yes to now, and then the door is there, and then grace comes.

[Speaker 6] (5:39:38 - 5:40:06)

Is awakening a gradual process as I've often heard you describe it, or is there also some sort of sudden shift that occurs as you've described your own awakening that is spontaneous and not something that is a gradual process?

[Speaker 1] (5:40:08 - 5:40:11)

For you so far, how has it been?

[Speaker 6] (5:40:12 - 5:40:13)

Very gradual.

[Speaker 1] (5:40:16 - 5:54:58)

Well, that's good enough. A very drastic and sudden transformation is rare, usually only in the face of very extreme suffering, either that comes from within or suffering that comes from real-life situation. It could be a serious illness or complete loss of everything or whatever it may be or some other form of pain.

Then there's a possibility of a very radical, sudden shift, but for most people it is a gradual awakening, and a gradual going back and forth. The awakening isn't necessarily like that. Usually any progress just goes in spirals, one could say.

There may be a falling back into unconscious patterns, triggered by situations, then a coming out again into more presence. But on the whole, there's a gradual increase in presence that then flows into more and more areas of your life. And then there can sometimes be a sudden burst triggered by some kind of event, and usually it's something that would not normally be called pleasant, and that can bring about a sudden burst in awareness and a sudden reaching a new level.

For example, I've had people who've been practicing for some time and a slow growth of presence, but wonderful to see. And then suddenly there's a serious physical condition, and that brings about a very rapid intensification of awareness. In some people it brings about a reaction into deep fear, so they lose awareness.

But in many others I have observed an intensification of awareness, especially if the

possibility of mortality comes in. And so suddenly there's an enormous influx. But that only came because they've already, for several years perhaps, been practicing living in awareness.

And then the slightest, if a big challenge comes in, then that will bring about a sudden, enormous intensification, and that may be the final breakthrough if there is such a thing. There's always, there's not really an end to it, to the deepening that's possible. So, but be happy with what's happening to you, and if anything else is needed, life will give it to you.

Pain is less needed as a spiritual teacher and as a device for breaking down the ego. Pain is not, is less, is needed less for those who voluntarily embrace the arising new consciousness or presence. But those who don't, they're like a shell is around them, and something within wants to grow, but can't.

It's pushing up against the shell, and that begins to be painful. Great pain in that. The ego shell is around them.

And in many people there is that longing inside, but the egoic patterns are very strong. And then what life tends to do is it knocks you with a, I don't have anything here, it breaks the shell through some kind of event, whatever it may be. For some people it's losing their job, could be trigger it, their job and their home.

Suddenly the wife leaves you. Could be something physical. Whatever it is, there's a shock, and that shock breaks you, or there's a crack that appears, and then the light can come through.

And so at first the crack, of course, is painful, and there's some suffering, and then suddenly, ah, intensification of aliveness. And those people I've met so many over the years, people who have had some kind of blow given, dealt to them by whatever you want to call it, life, the universe, fate, a blow, and retrospectively they said that was the best thing that could ever happen to me. And so many people have told me I wouldn't be here talking to you if that hadn't happened to me.

And I'm sure there are people here who could say the same. I know that I could say the same if without that intense suffering I wouldn't be here. So there's always grace hiding behind those seemingly negative events.

For many people in our present situation, economic situation, there are many people to whom things like that are happening. It's regarded as generally extremely negative, all the things that are happening. If you listen to the news, but all these challenges are potentially awakening experiences.

When everything is absolutely safe for you in life, the ego says, wouldn't that be great? I have a job and I've got job security because I have a contract that is permanent. It used

to be like that, especially in Japan, where once you had a job in Japan, even to some extent in the West, you knew it was for the rest of your life and the company would look after you to your grave.

And you would identify with the company. Your whole sense of who you are was bound up with that. And all that is not, even in Japan, is not the case anymore.

So there's fear comes in because of the lack of security. The ego demands security. It says, wouldn't it be great if I had real security?

Then I could really, if I didn't have to worry about my job, I could really pursue awakening and presence. No, you would go to sleep. With 100% security, almost everybody, unless there's some other factor coming in, would go to sleep.

Nice income every month, and you know it's going to be there in 10, 20 years. Pension plan, life insurance, retirement home waiting for me in Florida. Everything mapped out is nothing can go wrong.

Life isn't like that anyway. So even if it were like that on the financial and professional level, of course you would still be faced with the insecurity of your physical vehicle. And you would still be faced with the insecurity of the people around you who knows what they do.

Your children, your wife, who knows what may happen there. Or the insecurity of even driving your car, who knows what could happen. So to live with the insecurity or uncertainty about what's going to happen to you and to actually embrace it is a wonderful thing.

If you can, rather than feel, ooh, I don't know what's going to happen to me, the uncertainty of it, surrender into that uncertainty or insecurity because it is life. Life actually flows more powerfully into your life when there is uncertainty. That's why people, often people experience inner transformation when they go on a huge journey where every moment is uncertain and every moment is hazardous too.

Who knows what's going to happen next? So journey is almost a metaphor for life, but the essence of every journey is that it's uncertain what's going to happen tomorrow, where you're going to be, what the next step is going to be. Except, of course, if you book a package tour where everything is totally, you will be picked up by the bus at 10.55 and be dropped off your hotel at 10.30 and your meal will be served at such and such a time and, okay, if you're lucky enough, then maybe something will go wrong and then you can suddenly experience life. And it's that where transformation becomes possible. But if you always deny uncertainty, I want certainty, then it's like closing the valve through which life comes in and the possibility of transformation. That's why traditionally the idea of pilgrimage in all cultures is an important one.

It's been lost in the West where you go on a long journey. Usually you have some kind of destination. In medieval times in Europe, you would go to Rome.

It would be extremely hazardous, I mean, traveling from Northern Europe to Rome. It would take months and months and who knows, traveling to some pilgrimage, Santiago de Compostela or whatever, you walk along the trail where the pilgrims go. Now, that was all very hazardous and the real purpose behind it was never the arriving, it was the uncertainty of the journey itself, which has a transformational effect.

People knew that perhaps intuitively and they would become transformed by their pilgrimage. Nowadays, a few people that still go on pilgrimage, they board a plane and the plane then lands at Lourdes or wherever they go and then they go to Lourdes and then they go back on their plane. I mean, that's not a pilgrimage, but life is to embrace the uncertainty of life, live with it and begin to love it, not knowing what's going to happen because their all creativity gets also stifled by excessive security.

Isn't that amazing? If you look at the lives of artists and great writers, most of them, they didn't have a secure, there may be a few exceptions, but most of them, they didn't have a secure income, a few had, but many had to struggle. They were continuously, survival was uncertain.

So that's where you come to life and awakening becomes possible. I knew a Buddhist monk years ago who he told me he was, his teacher in the monastery in Thailand, although he was a Westerner, his teacher at one point when his teacher thought he was ready, he said, okay, here's an air ticket, you get on a plane and you fly to Kolkata and in Kolkata, you're on your own, no money, they're not allowed even to touch money, no money, no contacts, nothing. You get your air ticket, he got his air ticket, traveled to Kolkata and stepped out of the plane and then he did it, surrendered, stood at a straight corner with his begging bowl.

Now he was lucky because he was a Westerner dressed as a Buddhist monk so people noticed him and he was also tall and very good looking. But going into a place like Kolkata, very chaotic and you're competing with a million beggars. So he stood and it worked, even he got invited to somebody's home, he got everything worked, but initially fear came because that was his practice, to go beyond fear, to embrace the uncertainty.

Beautiful. So what the world calls negative is not necessarily negative. Don't always believe when you listen to the media and all that, there's always another side to everything and the difficulties that are being experienced collectively these days are also, mean also that there's an opening for many people into awakening through that.

So, thank you.

[Speaker 16] (5:55:24 - 5:57:00)

Eckhart, my question has to do with, I've been interested in the awakening experience all my life, ever since a child, I think, and read and studied many teachers, spiritual teachers, yogis, and they all have methods for awakening or experiencing the presence. I've also read your books and other people who've had a spontaneous awakening and the word is always used, spontaneous, it just happened to them. And it struck me that it's kind of like these lucky people who have had spontaneous awakening were blindfolded and taken to a beautiful land and then the blindfold is taken off and I totally believe in this beautiful land, but I wonder, yourself and others, how can you tell us how to get there?

What would be the methodology that you would know to get there? And I don't mean this in a confrontative way, but because you just spontaneously got there, like the person who was blindfolded and taken there. So, the question really says, how can you tell us how to get to the now when you yourself say you just found yourself aware of it or there?

Since you really didn't have to do anything to get there, how can you tell us how to get there?

[Speaker 1] (5:57:01 - 6:06:47)

Thank you. Thank you. I understand your question, although I wouldn't say that I'm telling you how to get there, but I endeavor to show you that you are there already.

So, it's not how do I get to the now, but how do I realize that I'm already there and that's all there is ever. So, it's really, I don't know what parable or analogy to use. The image just now came into my mind of a dormitory where lots of people are asleep in a big room and they're asleep.

And one person there wakes up and then he sees the others are still asleep and then he starts perhaps making a noise and saying, it's time to get up. Time to wake up. And a few continue to sleep.

They don't hear. And a few in the room, they begin to kind of blink a little and then they go back and then they blink. Does it really matter how this person woke up?

One person who is awake can have an awakening effect on the others in the room if he shouts loud enough and that's an analogy, it's not literally, which means if the pointers that he uses, anybody who has the slightest readiness to awaken, everybody here is awakening, even some of you are predominantly awake already. Everybody here, otherwise you wouldn't be here, you wouldn't be drawn here if you hadn't heard that shout, so to speak, says, wake up. Some people have read a book and they said, wow, yeah, so that was the shout, I mean, wake up.

Or they heard some fragment of a teaching and ah, that shout. We don't need to understand but why if, I wouldn't say, let's say I woke up because of somebody's shout,

then that's good enough for me to know that this person woke up and then he woke me up and he could only wake me up because I was already, the readiness to be awake was already there, so it does not invalidate the fact that he just woke up for some other reason. Maybe he had a dream in which the dream became such a nightmare that it pushed him out of the state of sleep.

I feel that's a bit what happened to me. Life became so unpleasant, so painful internally that the nightmare became unbearable, so that was the shout for me. Life was shouting, wake up by giving me that nightmare.

And so everybody gets something else, one way or another, but the main question is whether you can hear the shout and whether you are ready to open your eyes and then keep them open. So the fact that one person woke up in a different way from perhaps most others does not invalidate his or her function as an awakener. There are people who are already awakening, but their mind, of course, doesn't know that.

Their mind may still be searching and say, oh, I would love to awaken, but they're already in the awakening, fully in the awakening process, which the awakening process goes disidentified from the mind, present, here, no problem, and then fall back to sleep. It's a process. I call it a process because they fluctuate between mind identification and wakeful state.

So that's a gradual, and gradually the mind, the disidentified state, begins to predominate, and that's beautiful, but the mind might still say, oh, and why am I not awakening? It doesn't even know that you're awakening because it's not the thinking mind that awakens. It's consciousness withdrawing identification with the thinking mind, no longer totally consumed by the thinking mind.

Shh. Ah, one more written for the time being. Let's see.

Is consciousness aware of being in the now, or is such an awareness a separation from being fully present in the now? Well, maybe there's a misunderstanding. The deeper meaning, really, of now is, what is the now?

There isn't consciousness in the now. The now, the formless space, is consciousness. So consciousness isn't aware of the now, or anything like that, because they're one.

Consciousness is the now. The now is the space, the formless space in which the world of form appears. It arises and subsides.

So there's no problem here, except when you start thinking about it. Consciousness is the now. I am the now, which is space, formless.

Ultimately, I am not in the now. You are not in the now. You are the now.

That is the essence identity. The only thing that never changes, how do you know that? It's always now.

It's always now. Life is always now. It can't grow old.

It's always now. Now is consciousness, and consciousness is who you are. That's the equation.

So can you sense the now, right now, within, without, pervading everything, formless?

[Speaker 6] (6:07:27 - 6:07:43)

My question has dissolved somewhat, but I'll ask it anyway. Forgiveness. Is forgiveness just a requirement of our ego?

As we awaken, do we lose the need to forgive?

[Speaker 1] (6:07:45 - 6:20:09)

Thanks. Good question. Thank you.

Now, to forgive someone, of course, implies that there is something to forgive. If there's nothing to forgive, you won't even think or talk about forgiveness because there's nothing to forgive. So to forgive implies that there was something there that was non-forgiving, and that is dropped.

And so there was some kind of grudge, grievance, whatever it is, some issue with somebody, blaming, holding, longstanding grievance, whatever. It was there. It's then recognized.

You recognize that it is not healthy. If that's the only reason, good enough reason to drop it. It's not healthy.

It doesn't promote aliveness and well-being in yourself. Good enough reason to let go of that. It does nothing to right the balance.

If there's a karmic imbalance, somebody took something away from you or somebody did something to you, the grievance does nothing to redress the balance. You can allow the universe to redress the balance automatically, but you don't want to be stuck in that dysfunctional mind pattern. So you let go, and that means you forgive.

You say, I have forgiven that person. I'm no longer holding an emotional energy, a mental emotional energy field around that and derive a strange sense of satisfaction from that, which is what it is. It's not true satisfaction.

Satisfaction isn't ego satisfaction. It strengthens the ego. To have a grievance strengthens the ego enormously.

Some countries hold religions or groups within religions or tribes and nations have collective grievances for centuries, which make up an important part of their collective sense of identity, egoic identity. So yes, you're right when there's an acceptance of other people and what they do, which can only be there, of course, if you're really awake and present, because then you realize that whatever unconscious behavior other human beings manifest towards you or towards others is not ultimately who they are. It's not their true identity.

It's part of where we are. Humanity is in the evolution of consciousness. So they are manifesting consciousness in the state of torpor or sleep and they don't know what they're doing.

It looks as if they did. They are in the grip of certain energies and lack of presence. They are forced to act it out.

They're in the grip of very strong mind patterns and totally identified with their minds, which prevents them, many of them people who inflict suffering on others, it prevents being stuck so deeply in their mind patterns, which is all abstract, prevents them from having any empathy with other humans because they look through other humans through the density of their mental judgments and labels of who they are. They don't see you. They see their label of you.

It may be a personal label. It may be a collective label that they adopt and that's what they see. It's a mental abstraction, an inability to feel that you are an alive human being.

They can't even feel that they are an alive human being. They are a mental construct to themselves. They're so identified with whatever it is.

It may be an ideology, a belief system, or a set of grievances or judgments. It's trapped in conceptual mental thinking, which prevents you from sensing the aliveness of others and yourself. And then, of course, you do violent things to others because really they're all dead as far as you're concerned.

You've labeled people. You've killed them already by imposing a label on them. That's the first step in killing them.

And then the next step becomes much easier. You don't feel anything anymore. And once you realize that, then you see that they're suffering from a mental illness.

And so you would not want to equate somebody's mental illness with who that human being is. It's not who they are. The fact that they are mentally ill, by the way, does not mean that they will not suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness.

They will. That's how they generate their own suffering. They generate suffering for themselves and others.

But when you recognize that, then that which would need forgiveness doesn't even arise. Because all you forgive is the illusion that somebody's unconscious behavior was who they are, and then the reaction that comes with that. Yes, if you're so really awake, then forgiveness is no longer necessary because there's an acceptance and a recognition immediately of what it is in the other human that is perpetrating whatever they do, and it's not who they essentially are.

It is a manifestation of unconsciousness. Then there's nothing to forgive. You may still have to protect yourself to some extent or cross the road when you see a very unconscious being on one side of the road, it might be better to cross over to the other side.

But if contact is unavoidable, then all you can do is be there as presence. And sometimes it's possible, even in deeply unconscious humans, that you, by not reacting to their unconsciousness, that some consciousness is pulled out from underneath the unconscious patterns in that other human being. And suddenly you see, oh, there's still a human being there somewhere.

It may respond when you're present. There's no guarantee, but it may. And that's beautiful.

So, and then you treat the other not according to the behavior that they manifest towards you. You treat the other as if he or she were already conscious, that you honor their presence. And sometimes then the dysfunctional patterns thrives and lives on reaction of others, that it loves the dysfunctional pattern, wants the reaction and fight.

Now, if there is no reaction and you look through it, so to speak, then it sometimes happens that the dysfunctional pattern subsides. Maybe not for good, but in that moment, it subsides and something else shines through. And so you don't, when you're dealing with another human, always assume, so to speak, that there is something deeper there than the behavior that he or she manifests.

So it may just be a simple situation, an unfriendly person. You're asking somebody in a restaurant or wherever, you're asking for information. It's just an unfriendly person who regards you as a disturbance.

And so you're not a human being, you're a disturbance, even though their job may be to give information. I have seen some people who are behind information counters who treated everybody who came with a question as a disturbance that shouldn't be there. And again, that's a mind pattern, so there's no human being there, there's just an obnoxious disturbance.

And if you cannot react to that and treat them like a disturbance, which would be quite normal, which just strengthens their mind pattern because it confirms that you really are

a disturbance, if you treat them as if they were conscious and awake humans with respect and friendliness and kindness, then something surprising may happen. You don't need that to happen. It's enough of a reward for you to treat the other with kindness, assuming that there is a deeper part that is more genuine and kind also.

And sometimes it comes out then, and sometimes it doesn't. It's fine. But that's a beautiful practice, not to be drawn to the same level of interaction as what you are getting from the other.

Because that means if an unfriendly or unkind person provokes in you unfriendliness and unkindness, that means you are being drawn to the level of that person. That means that person determines your state of consciousness. That means also you're not present enough.

And that's the beauty of meeting difficult people in this world, which, of course, happens all the time. And you can look at it as obnoxious. I don't want to deal with people anymore.

I'm just happier with my dog. It is true that dogs are much easier to live with than many humans. But for us, it's here to practice with humans.

And the challenge is that that's how you get stronger, through the practice. So every unfriendly and unkind human is an opportunity for you to practice non-reaction and inner freedom. So it's wonderful.

And if you're not successful in your practice, and five hours later you're still harboring negative thoughts about that awful person, then it's time to forgive. Laughter Thank you.

[Speaker 5] (6:20:27 - 6:20:54)

My question is about right and wrong, or good or bad. It's been my experience when I'm in a state of presence, with no thoughts, that things are just as they are. And good and bad, or right and wrong, only appears when I start thinking about it.

So does that mean that good or bad is an illusion created by the mind?

[Speaker 1] (6:20:56 - 6:26:26)

Thank you. Thank you. I'll say a few words, and maybe if Marianne wants to say a few words, just different perspectives on the same question, probably.

There's two types of knowledge, one could say. One is conceptual knowledge, and the other is the deeper knowing. And to refrain from judging situations, events, people, means not to get attached to, or identify with, or even harbor conceptual judgments about situations and people and places.

Because the fact is that every situation, every moment that appears, is as it is. You can't argue with that. The present moment always is as it is.

So usually judgment means there's a rejection of the is-ness of the present moment, instead of a simple giving it your attention. If you can give it your attention without judgment, and hold it in that embrace, be the space for what is, then there is a deeper knowing that tells you what is needed in that situation, and it can result in action, or it may result in simple acceptance, depending what it is. There's a deeper knowing that is non-conceptual, that is not judgmental.

Judgmental means you're separating yourself from the form that life takes at this moment, and you're arguing with it. And so you say, this is bad, or whatever form. Shakespeare, as you know, said, nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.

So not arguing with the simple is-ness of what is, because it already is. The universe has brought the form of this moment about. Deeper knowing replaces the conceptual judgments of the mind, where you don't need to label, label, mentally label a situation.

This needs to be practiced rather than understood. Again, it's not because it's not conceptual. So the practice is to be with what is as in the simple presence of who you are, and to give your attention to what is.

And it might be a challenge. It might be a situation that requires action. Does the action come from a prior rejection of what is?

It could be anger then arises. Anger can be sometimes powerful. It can get you to do things, but it's contaminated with that negativity.

There's a more powerful action arises out of that deep knowing of what is required, and it's not based on judgment anymore. There's just a looking, and then there's action. In other words, a non-conceptual intelligence can operate in you.

You can just access that. A Course in Miracles has its own terms for that. The non-conceptual intelligence is not a judgmental intelligence, because it's non-conceptual, and that is applied to situations and people.

And especially wonderful how it changes relationships with other humans when you're no longer judging them. Because the moment you judge another human, what is it that you're judging? You're judging whatever is the unreality of who they are, essentially not the conditioned entity as which this human appears.

And in many cases, then it's a total delusion. This is how he is. This is how she is.

You freeze that. You think the unconscious behavior, perhaps, that this human manifests. You make it into an identity.

It's nothing to do with who that human being is. It's an expression of the delusion of unconsciousness in the collective. When the moment you judge the unconscious behavior of a human being, you make it into his or her identity, and you get trapped.

The moment you do it, you're trapped yourself. A Course in Miracles talks about that also. The moment you judge, you put the other person in a conceptual prison, and you yourself are in a conceptual prison.

So accessing the deep unknowing that is non-conceptual, that is really what is meant by this. And it's a question of practicing in actual situations. And now let's see what your perspective on it is.

[Speaker 3] (6:26:26 - 6:30:12)

Well, it's extremely important when you were saying our first job is to go into emptiness. Our first job is to go into not knowing. What in Christianity is called be as a little child.

What in the I Ching is called the empty rice bowl, the beginner's mind of Zen Buddhism, the pure consciousness. That's the first step. And that way you are allowing spirit to guide your perception.

Now, you might be shown that all that's necessary for transformation to occur here is for this person to be totally accepted as they are. And it's the martial arts of consciousness, and you're simply called to be a non-judgment. But sometimes, as Eckhart said, action on your part is called for.

However, everything we do is infused with the level of consciousness with which we do it. So if you do feel that action is necessary, then if you do it from a place of judgment, it will carry a different energy, and as Gandhi said, the end is inherent in the means. If you are led to take action, then you will take it from a different place, and therefore it will ultimately have a different effect.

And that possibility that action is called for, which Eckhart did point out, is extremely important. Because otherwise, what, it's okay that the Jews were carted off in trains to Auschwitz? I don't think so.

The spiritual seeker would just say it is not right, not wrong, just spiritual ignorance as though that's the end of the story. One of the things I appreciated, I was reading about Franklin Roosevelt during World War II. He referred to the Nazis as unworthy men, which was profound.

It wasn't evildoers. It simply was something that had to be handled. And so I think that that is so extremely important, because The Course in Miracles does talk about the difference between wrong-minded and right-minded.

There is evil in the world. The fact that it arises from a place where somebody's perfection was simply turned from, spiritual ignorance, etc., we would agree on the cause, of course, because everyone really is the innocent light of God. But The Course in Miracles does talk about how someone can become temporarily inaccessible to the power of the Atonement.

I appreciated a story about a colleague of ours named Matthew Fox. I'm sure you know Matthew. There was an ashram in the United States where one of the spiritual teachers from another country had come, and it came to be known that he had had sex with all these women who were there, and very young women, and it was a profound abuse of power, to say the least.

And so Matthew was brought in to help the community deal, to cope with what had occurred. And someone said, Well, you know, he did the best he could about this teacher swami person. And Matthew said, No, he didn't.

And I thought that was so great. No, he didn't do the best he could. So there is the level on which it was where his consciousness was at the moment.

And non-judgment, yes. But I think that this is a place for the serious spiritual seeker to be very, very discerning. There's a difference between a judgment and a description.

The fact that I don't judge you doesn't mean that if you're a serial rapist, just go home and drink tea and you'll feel better. Because at that current place where you are in your life, you are a threat to others. And stopping you is not a negative act.

[Speaker 1] (6:30:13 - 6:31:07)

Yes, and to recognize deep unconsciousness like that in another, the recognition of that dysfunction of deep unconsciousness is not a judgment. It's a simple recognition. And the recognition does not transform, make this person's identity, even those seemingly evil people, there is a place inside them that is pure, that usually in cases of deep unconsciousness that can only be reached for themselves if they go through intense suffering that they create not only for others, but also for themselves.

And that eventually breaks down the layers of unconsciousness and ego.

[Speaker 3] (6:31:08 - 6:32:00)

An interesting topic that emerges from that has to do with the consciousness of our prison system. You know, sometimes prison could conceivably have atonement value, time spent. The issue is if the consciousness that we have is that you are in prison only to be punished because you are a bad person, what does this do?

It turns our prisons into schools of crime. People come out even more violent than they

were before. But as we change our consciousness that the prison is a place of spiritual rehabilitation, then we will all get off the wheel of suffering.

It doesn't mean we won't ever send people to prison, but they would be sent from a different place within us. The experience for them would be very different and the consequences for us would be very different. Otherwise, it's just continuing the cycle of violence.

[Speaker 1] (6:32:01 - 6:32:03)

Yes. Thank you.

[Speaker 22] (6:32:04 - 6:32:05)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (6:32:16 - 6:49:55)

What signs do you see in the past year or so, either positive or negative, of the progress of the human race towards change and growth? Do you think we as a species are on the right track or have we gone even further astray? From Julie.

Are we on the right track or have we gone even further astray? If you look for evidence of the one, you will find it. If you look for evidence of the other, you will also find it.

So if you want to convince yourself or others that we are definitely not on the right track, you will find plenty of evidence that we are not on the right track. Just watch the news every evening. And if all the information that you have or the facts that you gather come from the media, then perhaps you won't find that many facts that we are on the right track.

But if you look elsewhere, you will find that indeed change is happening in many humans at this time. One is that we are here now. We are here at this very moment, in the now.

We are part of that transformation of consciousness. Why else should we be here? We have been led here because we are part of that universal movement of the transformation of human consciousness.

And even in the news, occasionally you have little glimpses that some change is happening. The transition in the United States, a more conscious president after eight years of unconsciousness, that is a good sign. I've seen some statements coming from Obama that are quite encouraging.

Some people have asked me, has he actually read *The Power of Now* or *New Earth*? I don't know. But if I hear things like, simple things, but surprising things coming from a politician, things like, you don't need to be disagreeable when you disagree with

somebody.

A very simple truth, but coming from a politician, it's an incredible thing. It's almost a miracle. Because the implication is that you don't need to be identified with your mind.

Beyond that, whatever opinion you might hold, you don't need to be so identified with your mental positions that immediately you make somebody who holds a different mental position into an enemy. That's what he's really saying, but he's expressing it in very simple terms. And that's a new thing.

We haven't had that in a long time in politics. Or even you have occasionally a person like we had in the past in Russia, Gorbachev. Compared to the previous Soviet leaders, Gorbachev was a highly evolved Buddha.

Perhaps he was a Buddha, or is a Buddha. But even if we only compare him to the previous leaders, it's like day and night. Gorbachev, I remember he said when there was another one of many crises between the United States and Russia, and they asked him, what is your opinion of this crisis situation?

And he just said, this too will pass. So occasionally you see some consciousness coming even into politics. And so now there's a good chance that consciousness is flowing into that area.

There's no guarantee, because what Obama is moving into now is he's moving into the old, already existing, ego-created structures. Now the question is whether he's able to sustain that state of consciousness that he's in now that is not dominated by ego, but goes beyond egoic conflict. Whether after having moved into all the political, economic, military structures that have been created by the collective ego, are these structures, not only in his own country, but also he has relationships through the structures with other structures in other countries which are equally ego-dominated, whether he's able to sustain the state of relative awareness or presence within that, or whether he will be pulled into greater unconsciousness through moving into those egoic structures.

Or he's able to maintain it and transform to some extent the old structures from within. It would be a miraculous thing, but not beyond possibility. It is possible that he's able to do that, but the forces of unconsciousness around him will be quite strong.

There is, you may be familiar with the phrase, I think it's called the military-industrial complex, I believe that's the phrase. I always thought that phrase must have been coined by somebody like Chomsky or somebody in the 60s, but in fact I recently learned that actually it was President Eisenhower who used that term for the first time when he was leaving office. He was actually giving a warning because he could see that there was an energy formation there that had its own momentum.

It was very powerful, and of course he didn't say that, but it's an egoic energy formation.

It doesn't mean that the people in it are evil, it's just an energy formation created by the collective ego. And of course that is still there.

Obama is not going to disappear the moment Obama moves into the White House. So we have something coming together there, and it remains to be seen whether he's able to sustain consciousness or whether the structures will pull him into unconsciousness. So what we are doing here is not separate from that, because ultimately it is the collective consciousness that creates whatever government you have, whatever predominates in the collective consciousness is then reflected externally.

And so as we are here, part of the transformation of consciousness that will affect the totality of consciousness also. So every single individual is vital in this. And any individual who is part of this transformation of consciousness, as we are, otherwise we wouldn't be here, it goes beyond the personal.

We are part of the transformation of consciousness, and of course that affects the totality of consciousness. So if there is beyond that, if there is something that you personally can do on the practical level, wherever it might be in politics, if you are in politics or it might be at work, if you work for a corporation, it might be in some business that you have that is your own, anything that you can do and be more present with what you do and do it without the interference of the egoic consciousness, all that helps. So it's vital then that we bring this presence into whatever we do. It is vital also that we don't complain too much about people who are not present yet, because that's another way of being pulled into unconsciousness.

The moment you complain about an unconscious person, and of course when I use the term unconscious I don't mean that they are... When I use the term unconscious I mean that they are identified with the involuntary mind activity which runs according to its old patterns. So they are completely in that.

The old reactive patterns happen again and again and again. They are unconscious. What they say is dominated, is controlled by that.

That's unconscious. Not to be there as the aware presence behind your mind, but to be totally identified with the conditioned mind is unconsciousness. So that's what unconscious means.

So when you are confronted with an unconscious person, you can actually see that it's unconscious, but the important thing is not to complain about somebody else's unconsciousness. And to... That makes...

That complaint is already an unconscious reactive pattern in you, and you are equating a pattern that operates in another human being with who that human being is. So you've made it much more difficult for that human being by equating a pattern in that human

being with who he or she is, you've made it more difficult for him or her to step out of it, and you yourself have become trapped again in a reactive pattern. So you see unconsciousness, spiritually speaking, still all around you, and that's fine.

You kind of look through it. You know it's there, but you look through. There on the surface you have whatever reactive patterns the person manifests.

And you look through, not necessarily visual. I'm using a visual image. You sense your way through that, and you can feel that that is not who that person is.

You don't have to tell this to yourself, but you can sense it. You can sense there is a human being underneath all that madness. In everybody, even some politicians, not mentioning any names, there is a human being underneath there somewhere.

Sometimes you have to look very deep, but it's there. So being pulled into unconsciousness can happen very easily. We were talking on a personal level and in politics.

A similar example, just one more example of the Second World War. We had, in the person of Hitler and the movement of National Socialism, extreme egoic unconsciousness taking over a whole country. And so, to some extent, the countries that were pulled into the Second World War also were pulled into not as great unconsciousness as the originating unconsciousness, but into some unconsciousness also, because they did things which we would say, how can you bomb a city that is filled with civilians, millions of civilians, knowing exactly there is no military value whatsoever.

We are complaining about terrorists and the so-called good people. Of course, the originating unconsciousness was even greater and even worse. But it pulled even the other powers into bombing cities, even with atom bombs and firebombs, where there were only women and children.

There were not even any men left, because they were all fighting somewhere. So sometimes the response then becomes equally unconscious. So evil, if you want to call it evil, breeds further evil, if you are not very careful, very present.

Or the response to terrorism, a few mad terrorists. We have a question here. Perhaps I'll read it.

That's our next, and then we can come to some spoken questions. Every question is interesting. This is from an anonymous questioner.

One of the most puzzling human behaviors for me is to witness an act of retribution. 9-11 happens, and rather than stopping and asking who perpetrated this act of violence and what healing needs to occur, our response is to ask who did this, so that we can inflict equal or greater pain and misery, thereby escalating the pain and generating cycles of

violence that become even more difficult to stop, as we have witnessed in the Middle East. Can humanity stop acting from its most base response?

This touches on what we have just been talking about. Can humanity stop acting from its most base response, which is the unconscious response? The questioner mentions 9-11 happens, and rather than stopping and asking who perpetrated this act of violence and what healing needs to occur, our response is to ask who did this, so that we can inflict equal or greater pain and misery.

The only thing that's even more stupid than this, even more stupid than hitting back at the unconscious person, is to hit back at somebody who didn't even do it. Just because you have to hit back at somebody, anybody will do. So the question is, can humanity stop acting from its most base response?

Yes. The most vital question is always to bring it back to yourself, because it always starts with the individual. Can I, so humanity is replaced with the word I, can I stop acting from my most base response?

Which is the old reactive pattern. It might not even be aggression, it can be another reactive pattern. But it's an old reactive pattern and it's ego.

Can I, well, you have to see when the next challenge comes into your life, whether or not the answer is yes or no. So I can't answer that, only you can answer it, but to answer even that you have to see when the next challenge comes into your life, and then say, okay, can I stop acting from my most base response? It's a somewhat complicated question, but a simple question, or another simple question is, what am I doing?

What am I saying? What am I feeling? What am I doing?

[Speaker 6] (6:50:16 - 6:53:46)

I've known all the things that you've talked about in many of your books, well, there's two books, but the books I've read. I've experienced this presence through music, and it's a very profound sense of grace that I feel, when I know I'm being played. In a sense, I'm an instrument.

And in a way, what we call instruments are voices. So I've been very taken with this description and imagery I've had from what you've discussed about being near the void, because that's what it feels like. Something comes up.

I know there's something in there. We've been talking about dogs a lot. It's like a smell inside.

And it can become obsessive because it's such a beautiful presence, but I think of Stravinsky. He said, The Rite of Spring. He said, I did not write The Rite of Spring.

I transcribed it. Some artists get these things, and the clarity is there. What I experience is mostly an inference or something that needs to be embodied and brought forth.

And my experience is more of knowing what it isn't. I just play it. As it moves through me, I can sense that grace, especially when I don't feel my hands.

I don't feel anything. I just feel this presence, this music that's just as surprising to me as anyone else. And I'm really fortunate because I never took lessons and never got trained or anything, so my mind doesn't really get that involved.

Don't ask me to play Happy Birthday, though. I don't know how to do that. So I guess my question was about this connection to the creative and, in a sense, the artifacts that come.

I use the word inform. When I was thinking, does art and music inform the ego of presence? That was really what it was.

And so how does one be part of that manifestation but not get too involved to keep the distance so one doesn't become too obsessed with that process? So the balance of the two, that's what I'm looking for. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (6:53:56 - 7:03:52)

Well, of course, on the one hand, you have the creative process of music or art, and then you have the finished product, and then you have the piece of music that's being played and somebody listens to it. Or the work of art is there and somebody contemplates it. When you ask, can art or music inform the ego of presence, well, first of all, the ego doesn't know anything about presence.

So it can't do that. And there needs to be some opening in the ego in order to be receptive to the power that is latent in music or art that was created from that deep place. There's a lot of music and art that's not necessarily created from that deep place, but the ego is trying to be clever, and so it tries to come up with something clever, and then that's fine.

But let's talk about some piece of music or work of art that has come out of connectedness with the stillness or the presence. So some of that then, to some extent, the work of art or the piece of music still carries that energy field. So it can put the listener in touch, or the person who contemplates the work of art can put that person in touch with the deeper dimension within, as long as there's even a little bit of opening is required.

If there's only the density of the ego, then the transformational possibilities of art or music are not realized. So a little bit of opening is required in the viewer or the listener, and then it can be quite a wonderful thing to listen to music or to contemplate a work of

art and be transported, if only for a moment, into that alert stillness out of which it originally came. That's a beautiful thing.

Another aspect of your question is, I believe, losing oneself, perhaps going too deep, almost losing yourself in the ground out of which creativity comes, in the creative process. There's always a balance that is needed so that you don't lose yourself in being. It could happen to an artist, it can happen to some people who awaken spiritually and they suddenly plunge so deeply into being that they lose all interest in doing.

That happened to some spiritual masters who spent several years in being without doing anything, for example, Ramana Maharshi in India, who had to be fed for several years because he wouldn't even pick up food. He was so deeply immersed in being he just sat there, and people recognized something extraordinary about him, which they wouldn't have done in the West. In the West, he would have been a medical problem.

They recognized something extraordinary and they put food in his mouth. But there was a loss of balance, certainly, he could no longer function in this world. This, of course, to such an extreme, this does not happen to you, you're still here.

And then gradually, after a few years, he gradually was beginning to function again in this world and then gradually was able to regain a balance between dealing with things out here and connectedness with being. In a slightly minor way it happened to me when I lost interest completely in doing and drifted around for two years. It wasn't a problem to me, it was only a problem to people who were watching me or who knew me.

So there was a loss of balance for a while, but then gradually the balance reestablished itself. I didn't have a teacher as such, so it had to be a natural process. So not to go so deep that you...

as long as there's the... you have to go within and then take... give form to that which was resting in the formless, be used by it so that through you it can come into this world of form.

Don't stay down there and lose yourself in it. Not necessary. So bringing...

Do you... What do you compose? Music?

Yes, yes. Well, that's a wonderful way of getting in touch with the stillness within any creative process. Anybody who is...

I don't, unfortunately. The world has not given me that gift of being able to either play music or have some kind of art to bring into this world, for a reason, because the world also needs direct spiritual teaching. And so I love some...

listening to certain kinds of music. For the viewer, it's important not to become

dependent, however, on anything external to enter the state of presence. So whereas music can be a help, there too needs to be a balance.

If the only place you can become still is when you listen to certain kinds of music, then that's not quite it, because you're becoming dependent on something external to get in touch with that. So use it as a help, and this is the same as a spiritual teacher or spiritual teaching. It can be a great help to listen to a tape or to see a video or whatever.

A great help. But if you become totally dependent on that or on a group, also a group can be a great help. To sit with a group of people in an energy field of presence can be a great help, but not becoming dependent on the group either, not becoming dependent on one teacher, any external teacher.

And every good teacher will tell you when the time comes, enough is enough. The true teacher is within you, and what you see in me, that which you find so precious in me, must be in you, otherwise you wouldn't see it. So the good teacher will always direct you back into yourself, will not foster any kind of dependency.

So knowing what is a help, using it, any of the things that can be helpful, but not becoming dependent, eventually it is necessary for you to go there without any help, still being able to appreciate even teachers and teachings. I love listening to other spiritual teachers if they come from a deep place. I have great joy when I listen.

Wow, this is so wonderful. Or reading a spiritual book that comes from the deepest place, there's still great joy in that. It's nothing to do with needing.

It's enjoying a slightly different expression of the same deep truth. Just wonderful. And then also you can see it wherever it is, no matter in what form it's hiding.

You can see the truth shining through wherever it is hiding. It might be hiding in some ancient religion, hiding very deeply. And there you see it shining through.

There may be a lot of mythology around it, there may be a lot of cultural beliefs around it, and yet, deep down there, you can still see, oh, this is about, this is the truth, shining through all the mythology around it, and so on. So once it's in there, you see it everywhere, but primarily it is who you are. So I wish you well, and be thankful that you have this wonderful gift.

[Speaker 4] (7:04:13 - 7:06:06)

My original question seems quite obsolete. Good. And that I think is a wonderful thing to be able to share.

I will share my original question, and then hopefully maybe go beyond. The original question had to do with expectations. I asked about if it was reasonable to expect

honesty and openness.

To what? To expect honesty and openness in a marriage relationship or in an intimate relationship, preventing the hurt of finding out things at a later date. And I was in Malibu with my husband and listened to Eckhart and submitted the question shortly after, and in the period of time between then and now, have come to some completely different realizations, and most of all realizing that I may have preferences, and that's where it ends, having preferences.

The expectations have hopefully subsided tremendously. What I'd like to evolve to, though, is the question about intimate relationships and the challenge of honoring our own personal stillness and each other's need for stillness, and at the same time meeting those practical needs to negotiate preferences each 24-7, if you could give some insight. I think it's a challenging experience.

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (7:06:07 - 7:06:35)

Life didn't promise marriage is going to be easy. Or relationships. Yeah.

So that's wonderful. First, can I ask you about just your own realization in coming to what you found that your whole issue that you were having about honesty and being found out, I think it was that you called it.

[Speaker 4] (7:06:35 - 7:07:02)

I made a realization maybe 8, 10 weeks ago that I really only have my own honesty and my own openness to focus on, and that by focusing on anything that's going on in my significant other, I'm really expending energy that's taken away from focusing on what I need to be focusing on.

[Speaker 2] (7:07:02 - 7:07:33)

Good. Okay, that's good. That's good.

And now it almost sounds like as if you're still intertwining it in this next question that you had about the intimacy and the amount of stillness that perhaps you need and what he needs and how to integrate that into your everyday life and into just the common things, as even this first question posing this, your expectations about honesty.

[Speaker 4] (7:07:34 - 7:07:45)

Yes, and I think maybe control is an issue, just continuously letting go of control and just allowing things to evolve.

[Speaker 2] (7:07:45 - 7:07:48)

What does your control look like in the relationship?

[Speaker 4] (7:07:48 - 7:08:23)

Well, I think much like the woman that just shared before me, there's probably a deeper fear of if we're not traveling in a similar path, if the path isn't parallel, if it gets too far away from one another, then what? And I'm kind of chuckling at myself because here we are, the two of us together, and I didn't even initiate being here this time, he did. So what am I questioning, you know?

I'm grateful it's all in place, and I need to get out of worrying and concerning myself about it and just allow the process.

[Speaker 2] (7:08:24 - 7:09:25)

So intimacy cannot happen if you have these expectations about what a relationship should look like and what it should be like and how he should be, how I should be, how we should be. There is no space then for intimacy because intimacy, you can say, requires that there is this space. So the space is here, and we come together in that space where there is no expectations because isn't that when you find, when there are no expectations on you, can you then be your true self?

Just be, in other words. Expectation even of yourself, let alone the expectation you have of your relationship and your partner. But you cannot be if you have any expectations.

Be still, be present.

[Speaker 4] (7:09:28 - 7:09:31)

Allow preferences to be shared as preferences.

[Speaker 2] (7:09:31 - 7:15:27)

Preferences, we all have preferences. But the demand that those preferences must be met or must be somehow manifested, which you can say then cuts off that intimacy. I have a lot of preferences.

I mean, I would like Eckhart to do the dishes more. I'd like to have him help me cook more and clean the house more. I mean, I really would.

Does it happen? Not really. Am I okay with that?

Yeah, I'm okay with that. Does it bug me sometimes? Yes, it bugs me sometimes.

I mean, these are all real things that happen in the emotional level and all the things of,

you know, the mind that goes on. Does it have me love him less? No.

Do I not want to be with him because he won't pick up after himself? No. Sometimes, yes.

But on the whole, no. And it's just, it's okay. I mean, it's like putting things in perspective, you know.

What do you want more? Someone that you can actually live and have an intimate still relationship with, even though there's stuff going on in the mind that might happen and things, everyday life that may happen. You know, it's finding also the understanding.

I have observed that Eckhart is from a, I mean, he's like 62 years old, so he's from a generation where, as a man and as a young boy, he didn't have to do anything. I mean, really. He didn't have to cook.

He didn't have to clean. He just didn't have to do anything. And then he was a bachelor for most of his life.

So to try to get him to do anything now at this age, I mean, I'm so fortunate, lucky that I've got him to do what he's doing right now. So I'm grateful. But I've been in other relationships too, whereas, you know, men have done things.

So it's not about that. So I always, you know, would have to put myself when that would come up, I'd always say, okay, I've got to put this in perspective here now. Am I willing to leave this relationship because he won't help me enough?

And then I actually even started looking at how I even, my own wording of that and expectation of that. I realized, I said, wait a second here. I want someone, I want a partner to help me.

Like as if that was never his job and that it's my job and I need to help her. And this light bulb went on. I go, whoa, that's not the relationship I want either.

Is that what I have been projecting out and then thus receiving? I went, wow, no, he's a partner. He's a full grown up man that I don't need help.

But my, you can say wishes that my partner will take up his share. So when I realized that I let go of that concept of like thinking that I need help, that I'm somehow in charge of all the household things and I need help with this. No, I wanted a relationship where I could have someone meet me.

And when that changed, it also changed. Not that he meets me equally because I've got a different sort of conditioning, you can say. A disposition of, you know, I like things neat.

I like things, you know, the way that I like things. And he likes the way that he likes

things, which it doesn't matter if things are all over the place. So, but he will do things in his own time.

He can watch me clean a house. Like when we're away and we're away for six months, it's amazing how dirty a house can get. You know, those who have this experience, it's like, whoa.

And finding a house cleaner on a small island is sometimes impossible. So, and plus we were undergoing renovations. And this is just recently.

It took me four days of cleaning. It was only on the third day that he decided he could help. But, you know, it was okay because I know I like the, if I want things done the way that I like, I'm responsible.

If I do want to ask him to start doing something earlier, then I'll ask. But I was actually okay. And it's actually, I did a little sort of test.

I wanted to find out how long it would also take him. But, you know, but when he did, I was so grateful. It was wonderful.

And we, everyone needs their space. Every space we go into, we have to find a place that is big enough that we can find our own corners.

[Speaker 4] (7:15:29 - 7:15:55)

It seems to me that part of this whole, of what you have addressed here is that he doesn't need me to help him on his spiritual path any more than I need him to help me know where my path is. And that can only interrupt intimacy rather than produce it. Yeah.

Thank you.

[Speaker 22] (7:15:56 - 7:15:57)

Yeah, exactly.

[Speaker 4] (7:15:57 - 7:16:11)

Because our spiritual journey is our own. And the more respectful we can be of one another's journeys, the more we open the possibility for greater intimacy.

[Speaker 2] (7:16:12 - 7:17:02)

Exactly. And we all have our own time where we need that space. And it's giving that space, the honor, to that person who needs that space at that moment.

And not that say, hey, no, we've got to be intimate now. And they're going, no, I need

space now. And you've got to look then at your own insecurity about if you are going like this to your partner.

All that conditioning. You know, feed me. I need you.

Or we've got to go on this spiritual journey together. Because we are all on a spiritual journey together. But we do it all separately.

It can be an alone journey. And you'll even look at the word alone. It's all one.

[Speaker 4] (7:17:04 - 7:17:10)

And I am a Libra, always looking for balance. Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (7:17:15 - 7:18:26)

As we begin to awaken, it's so, I think it's just so vital. At least it has been in my experience. To be able to have and give yourself that space, that individual time alone that's required just to go totally inward.

Because when you're always with somebody, including your partner, it's more challenging to just go just completely inward. So it requires this, maybe a room. Or you going out if there's, you know, your circumstances of your living situation.

Or you're living in a studio apartment or something. Who knows, maybe you go and you close the door and have a long bath. Or sit on the toilet for a long time.

We need this time because the answers come from within. And the realization of stillness, of who you are ultimately, comes from within. And only from within can you know this.

[Speaker 1] (7:18:52 - 7:19:27)

Your own spiritual awakening came about spontaneously while you were in the midst of a depression. Now you teach people various approaches to awakening, such as paying attention to the inner body. But since your own awakening happened on its own accord, not because of techniques or approaches, what makes you think that what you are teaching will actually work for people since you did not use any of these approaches to awaken?

If awakening happens spontaneously, why meditate? Why pay attention to the inner body? Why invite awakening in any way?

[Speaker 23] (7:19:27 - 7:19:33)

Why indeed.

[Speaker 1] (7:19:47 - 7:47:03)

Now you may have noticed I have never said to anybody, you should listen to me or you should pay attention to the inner body or you should be conscious or whatever. For some people the awakening happens spontaneously, very quickly. For other people the awakening is a more gradual process.

And all the things I mentioned in the question, in paying attention to the inner body, meditate, any kind of spiritual work, is not separate from the awakening, but is part of the awakening. It is the awakening consciousness that makes you do these things. It is not something separate from the awakening process, but part of the awakening process.

If you come here more than once, you are awakening. Once could be a mistake. Or if you read an entire spiritual book that is truly empowered by spirit and you are enjoying it, you are awakening.

Now you could read a few pages and hate it, or you could read an entire book because you had to write a review about it and hate it. That is possible, so there are some exceptions to this, but you are not enjoying it. So we can't separate the awakening from what is happening to you right now.

You would not be drawn to this if the awakening were not happening. So in other words, you are awakening. And if you are awakening, then you may feel a pull towards that.

But the pull is not so much... the mind may misinterpret it. It may say, I need to become fully awake.

But you are awakening already. It is already happening. That is why you are here and why you are listening.

So we can't really separate that. Another similar question, it is almost the same question as this, is do we do something? These are very two extreme schools of teachings, spiritual teachings.

You have to work hard at it, otherwise you won't get it, says one. The other one says there is nothing you can do. But you are not going to work hard at it just because somebody tells you you need to work hard at it.

You work hard at it, if you even can call it that. Something wants to come through here, through this form. Something wants to come through you.

And so then you take up some spiritual practice. There is an inner urge to take up spiritual practice. That is the awakening.

It is happening. It wants to make room. And sometimes the awakening makes room drastically.

It just pushes everything out of the way, like a volcano. And at other times, and more frequently, the awakening is a more gradual eroding of the egoic layers that cover the splendor that is underneath, that which wants to come forth. It is a gradual erosion from within and from without.

Sometimes suffering helps too, a little bit. So it is undergoing the process of awakening. So you are awakening already.

It is not something that is going to happen. It does not mean that occasionally you cannot be asleep. I mean, spiritually speaking, you can still go back to sleep periodically.

Most people do. That is why it is called awakening process. It means there is a falling back, all patterns.

You don't go like that. You go like... And sometimes...

My sons drowned in the sea ten months ago. I did surrender, but when I felt the peace and calm coming over me, it felt wrong. It was not right to feel peace and calm with such a loss.

That's the natural way of being after death of a loved one. There is suffering at first, and then there is a deepening. And in that deepening, you go to a place where there is no death.

And the fact that I'm not talking to the questioner who is not here, the fact that you felt that means you went deep enough to the place where there is no death. But their mind, conditioned as your mind is, of course, by the society, the contemporary world you live in, which knows nothing about that dimension, your mind then tells you that there is something wrong about this. And your mind says, I should not be feeling peace.

It's not what one feels in a situation like this. But that's a conditioned thought by the culture that you live in. So instead, you can recognize when this happens, when that thought comes, and recognize it as a conditioned thought that is not true.

It doesn't mean that the waves of sadness don't come back from time to time. But in between the waves of sadness, you sense that peace. And as you sense that peace, you can sense the essence of your children also, the timeless essence.

So death is a very sacred thing, not just a dreadful thing. When you react to the loss of form, it's dreadful. When you go deep enough to the formless, the dreadful becomes, it's no longer dreadful, it's sacred.

You have, then you experience the two levels when somebody dies close to you. Yes, it's dreadful on the level of form. It's sacred on the deeper level.

And death can enable you to find that dimension in yourself. And you're helping

countless other humans if you find that dimension in yourself, the sacred dimension of life. So death can help you find the sacred dimension of life, where life is indestructible.

Surrender can open that door for you, complete acceptance of that. So honor that sacred dimension and realize that what your mind is saying, that this isn't right, is just a form of conditioning. It's not the truth.

It is supremely right. Death is always a window into the formless as you accept it, surrender it, because the form is gone. Your mind becomes still when you surrender to death.

There's nothing, explanations are, it's not through explanations that you accept death. Yes, you could have explanations, mental explanations that say, well, he or she, they will move on, reincarnate or go to a place of rest. That can be comforting, but there's a deeper, you can go to a deeper place than that where you don't need even explanations.

A state of immediate realization of the sacredness of death, because what opens up when the form dissolves is life that is beyond form, and that's sacred, that's the only thing that is sacred. It's not a thing, that is the sacred dimension. You can get tiny glimpses of that, tiny glimpses of that when you lose something and you completely accept that it's gone.

It's just a tiny glimpse of death and can give you a tiny realization, maybe even more than tiny if you're ready. Do people start becoming nicer as you become more aware, or is it just that you no longer get consumed by the anger that arises when in the company of not so nice people? Well, I would say both.

When you become more aware, you're not reactive anymore towards people, you don't personalize things anymore, make everything personal, and are always looking out for some kind of hidden insult or look at what's his real intention behind what he's saying, what does he really want. You're just, there's an openness and a nonjudgmental attitude towards others that nonreactive relationships then generate already more consciousness in the other because two unconscious people strengthen each other's unconsciousness. So if somebody says or does something that may be unconscious and I don't react to it, it does not become amplified through my reaction.

If somebody says or does something unconscious and I react to it, condemn it, even if it's just in my mind, I actually amplify it and I myself become part of that unconsciousness through my judgment. If I can be nonreactive, I can allow other humans their behavior because that's their present stage of consciousness. They behave as they have to behave at this moment.

So I allow them to behave, to do what they do, I accept it, and then suddenly there is a different energy there. So I don't amplify that and those people then, I don't condemn

them. I don't equate their unconscious behavior with who they are.

That's why it's so important not to judge others. It doesn't mean you kind of go through life saying, oh, they're all, everything is fine, that you don't see unconscious behavior. You see what they do, you know what they do, but you don't equate that with who they are.

You know it is an overlay on, it is human unconsciousness they're expressing that. It's not who they are in their essence. If you confuse the unconscious behavior with who they are in their essence, then that's called judgment.

If you see that somebody is doing something extremely unconscious, that's not judgment because you don't equate it with who that person is. And so you don't say, he is evil. That statement would be wrong of anybody because in essence nobody is evil, but they manifest extreme unconsciousness, which we can call in many cases evil.

So that's important then not to strengthen that and to get trapped in illusion because when we believe in our own judgments, it's not only we trap others in the judgments, we ourselves get trapped in the judgments. Also people become nicer, which is true what the questioner says. People become nicer when you are present and aware because they can feel the absence of judgment in you.

Even if they may not be able to tell you, but I can feel the absence of judgment, they only feel it as a certain goodwill flowing out from you towards them or an acceptance flowing out from you towards them. And humans can feel that. Even unconscious humans, they can feel that.

And everybody is grateful for that. Underneath all their madness they feel grateful because somehow in that acceptance, in that goodwill that kind of flows out through that space of acceptance, they feel a little bit more themselves than they usually are. And when a human feels a little bit more at ease in themselves when they come to you, they like you and they are very nice to you.

They don't know why. And their usual ego patterns, not all of them are operating anymore. Some may still come up, of course.

So the ego is less. The ego doesn't feel threatened. It feels, oh, there's no need to be that defensive here.

The ego feels it can kind of relax a little bit. It's still there in the background, like a dog. But it's not in its usual state, like the Rottweiler.

So it's just, okay, can relax a little now. And then they like you, so you become a nice person to them. That's perhaps all they know.

When they ask, oh, he's such a nice guy, they like to see him, like to go to him, and that's a nice, okay. So, yes, you do experience that. So partly simply because presence, acceptance is there and is recognized, and partly because there's the absence of reaction when somebody suddenly blames you, for example, says, you left that door open.

You shouldn't. And say, oh, I did? Yeah.

The usual ego thing, of course, is to say, no, I didn't. Whether you did or not, because it's regarded as the ego feels diminished when somebody blames you. You did that.

No, I didn't do that. You did. And it starts from there, and then escalates.

Why do you always blame me? Look what you did yesterday. That's called reaction, defensiveness.

And that's not there. So then it's just you're stating the facts. You left that door open again.

No, I didn't. And then there's no further arguing. Yes, you did.

Well, maybe, if that's what you believe. Or say, yes, you're right, I did that again. Sorry.

You don't feel diminished when you were wrong. The ego feels diminished. Just to admit that you've been wrong is a dreadful thing.

So the ego can't do that. It's like a little desk. To say that you've been wrong is a little...

And if somebody proves to you that you've been wrong, it's even worse. And then some people will start hitting you. That's how an ego can easily do.

If it's so obvious that you've been wrong and somebody proves it, then you start hitting them. That's the big argument. And if you knock him out, the ego still wins.

Yes, there is a general improvement in relationships, of course, with presence. Is proximity... This is Nancy from Florida.

Is proximity to someone who is in presence important or does listening to an awakened person on CD equally helpful? If the readiness is there, I would say listening on CD can be equally helpful for those who are ready. And even a book can be equally helpful for those who are ready.

For others, the added presence of an actual physical presence of a teacher might sometimes break certain egoic resistances. But that's more the case in a disciple-guru relationship. And so I'm not a guru as such, although some people would want me to be one.

A guru works closely together with disciples. And I did that for a little while, for a few years, and that was fine. But life has now called upon me to fulfill a different function.

And there is still a place for spiritual teachers who work with people more closely on a prolonged basis with disciples. Again, I could say a lot about that, the dangers involved and the possibilities involved in that. But I know that from correspondence I receive that many people's lives have changed from watching CDs or reading books.

Because when you recognize presence in another, that means there must be presence in you. So it's always in you. When you recognize there's this great spiritual being there, how do you recognize it?

Through the very same consciousness in you. Because if it wasn't in you, you wouldn't recognize this. This person would look totally ordinary to you and would say, I don't know what this fuss is all about.

So there were always many people who never... Without that opening, you can live with the Buddha for 10 years, 20 years, and say, he's just a completely ordinary person. And in a way he is.

I mean, he's more ordinary than ordinary without an ego, that's true. So when you recognize presence in another, at that moment there is the presence in you. Only presence can recognize presence.

So it's always in you. So whether you can recognize it when you see a CD, you say, wow, where does that wow come from? The power, the aliveness that the mind is telling me is in that person there.

No, it's in you. So it's better not to project it and make a person special, which the mind tends to do. Well, the person is special, but so are you.

You are equally special. There's nobody closer to God than you are, to use that word, except that they may not know it. They may not know it.

So when you recognize this, the wonderful thing is, turn your attention within and say, where is the realization that this is a wonderful spiritual being talking right now? How do I know that? Because you are a wonderful spiritual being, so to speak.

You're not a being, you are an expression of being, but the words are limiting.

[Speaker 11] (7:47:28 - 7:47:35)

Is the ego the source of our thoughts, or are our thoughts generated elsewhere and passed through the ego?

[Speaker 1] (7:47:36 - 7:55:12)

Oh, thank you. There is no ego apart from the thoughts. The thoughts, identification with thoughts is ego.

But the thoughts that go through your mind, of course, are linked to the collective mind of the culture you live in, humanity as a whole. So they are not your thoughts as such, but you pick them up from the collective, most of them. And so you identify with thinking, and the identification with thinking becomes ego, which means simply that you believe in every thought that arises, and you derive your sense of who you are from what your mind is telling you who you are.

Opinions, viewpoints, that's me. Some people talk to themselves, you know, you are, oh, you are so good. Why doesn't the world recognize you?

Or the mind says, you're no good. Same thing. You're no good at all.

You fail at everything, don't you? And then you believe in it. And then you suddenly have a low view of yourself.

Why do you have a low view? Because you believed in your thoughts. And why are you thinking those thoughts?

Probably you picked them up somewhere, maybe in childhood. Maybe your mom was so stressed out that you said you're no good. And so you pick up certain thoughts, and they get stuck in your head.

Those thoughts that you hear in childhood, they're little energy forms like entities, and they get stuck in your head and don't refuse to go. And the more you believe in it, the more deeply lodged they become in your mind. And so some people are stuck with very hostile entities.

I'm saying entity, not in some spooky way. But every thought is an energy form, and as such, we could call it an entity. And there are many people in this world who are stuck with hostile, life-denying, continuously critical and attacking entities that they carry in their head, and they believe that is who they are.

And they are continuously attacking themselves. And if they are not attacking themselves, they attack others around them. Let me tell you who you are.

Of course, what they're really saying is, let me tell you who I am. So they project the famous, you know the famous saying, we don't see things as they are. We see them as we are, which means you look at reality through the screen of your thinking and your judgment, which is conditioned by the past.

A dreadful prison to live in, it's like blinkers, worse than blinkers. It's like looking at reality through heavy veils. Ooh, it looks so dark here.

Is that a human being? So the identification with thinking, believing in your thoughts, having no space outside of the movement of thought. Again, here we come to the vital thing, lack of space inside.

That is the unconscious condition, spiritually, completely unconscious. And then you are burdened with a heavy ego. You are the ego, which is not an entity apart from thought.

It is thoughts that you have identified with. And the first moment of freedom comes when you realize that certain thoughts have been going through your head for years, perhaps. And that they are only thoughts.

And that you are not the thought. You are the awareness. In my case, I became aware that I had a thought, for example, that started in childhood, one of many negative thoughts I had.

Bad things always happen to me. Bad things always happen to me. That was when I saw people around me, okay, they have got all these nice things, and always there would be bad things happening.

And of course, your perception then becomes selective. When you have a thought like that, you notice much more, because in everybody's life, in daily life, things go wrong, you miss a bus, you get stuck in a traffic jam, or you lose some money. But yes, this is normal.

But if you have the thought, bad things always happen to me, you are extremely aware of those things, and they confirm to you that the thought is correct. And this is the selective perception of reality through the screen of thinking. So the reality will confirm to you, and not only that, that thought, or any thought of that kind, actually attracts bad things, negative things.

Or if you believe people are basically bad, and that's a deep-seated belief, and you don't realize it's only a thought in your head, or a belief, not only do you, would you single out where you observe unethical or bad behavior in others, you would, ah, there it is. Not only that, you actually are much more likely to encounter people who manifest that kind of behavior, because you attract it. And so, that's just incredible how people create their world through that.

So freedom comes from stepping out, encountering, first of all, a little bit of space inside your presence. And then from there you realize certain thoughts as repetitive and just a thought. Bad things always happen to me.

Oh, there it goes again. I just thought that before. So that's the, to become free of ego means becoming free of thought, identification with thought.

That's the end of the ego. It may reassert itself from time to time, but at least that's the

awakening. What about your thoughts?

Habitual thoughts, do you...

[Speaker 8] (7:55:12 - 7:55:15)

Probably that I have to get everything right.

[Speaker 11] (7:55:16 - 7:55:20)

There's an intense, you know, figure it out and get it right. It rules me.

[Speaker 1] (7:55:21 - 7:55:22)

And if it's not right?

[Speaker 11] (7:55:24 - 7:55:32)

I escape. I just won't do it. I pretty much predict ahead of time, so I won't try a lot of times.

[Speaker 1] (7:55:33 - 8:21:30)

Ah, yes. Yes. Some people are afraid of not succeeding in whatever they do because they have a self, their self image, which is derived from thinking, would suffer.

If I fail at something, then I will, my self image will be injured and therefore I'm not even going to try. And again, that's to do with deriving your identity from thinking. And even the thought I have failed is a lie.

I am a failure is an even greater lie. You have not failed, you can simply reinterpret it, I have learned something here. This is not for me, for example.

So, but why believe the lies that your mind produces? So, as you know, people, many people live with a very hostile mind. That's, but those people are, the motivation, their motivation would probably be very great.

I would hope to get out of their minds. But first they need to realize that their problems are self-generated, mind-generated, not world-generated. Sometimes when I hear you talk about presence, it seems like you're describing a state in which there's no mental or emotional content, and yet I experience emotions in presence, perhaps sadness when something happens that is difficult for another person, or at the news of the death of someone I love, and I experience that emotion happening in present time.

Isn't this possible for, isn't it possible for emotional experiences to arise in presence? Yes, you can have presence while the emotions are happening or while, even while thoughts are happening. It means you're not totally lost in, totally identified with, totally

drawn into the emotion or the thought.

There is in the background a space of awareness that in the foreground there may be anger, sadness, and you're not totally lost in it. There's a space for it that you still sense, and you are essentially not the emotion. You're the awareness behind the emotion.

You know that this emotion is there. The same thing can happen when the mind is active. You can talk, and the mind can completely take over, and you become lost in your mind in a stream, either a stream of thinking or a stream of speaking.

You can observe it. If you can't yet observe the mind stream in yourself, you can occasionally just quietly observe people talking to each other, and especially people who are having a discussion, because when you're having usually a discussion or disagreeing about something, there is not only the mind, there's also an emotion that goes with the mind stream. That's the disagreement.

Why is there an emotion when people are having a discussion and a disagree? Why is there an emotion that goes with their mental positions? Well, because they're identified with the mental position.

That identify means their sense of self has become one with the thought. The consciousness, the I, has identified with the form rather than realizing that it is formless in essence. It has lost that knowledge, so consciousness is in a dreamlike state, I could say.

Consciousness identifies with I, with the form, and so there is a self-identification with the mental position or thought, which means anybody who questions or doubts or contradicts this mental position or thought is unconsciously regarded by the self-identified thought structure which you have become. The ego is part of ego. Anybody who disagrees, contradicts, doubts, is unconsciously, not in so many words, but unconsciously regarded as an enemy because you are threatening.

It's a delusion, but there's an unconscious belief that the other person is threatening my very being because the person is threatening my mental position, which I have identified. So you can... It's a very deeply unconscious process, and it requires quite an alertness to see it in the moment that it happens in yourself.

But perhaps next time somebody comes to you and you're having a kind of disagreement about something and suddenly you can feel an influx. As you defend your position or contradict the other person or justify something, feel the emotion that flows into what you say. It will be some kind of either aggressive or defensive emotion that goes with it, either some fear or some aggression.

If you can be aware of that at that moment and realize what is happening, that you have identified with something in your mind, believing that that is you, believing your very

existence is threatened by somebody contradicting you. It's unconscious. That's why people get aggressive and negative energy flows the moment somebody contradicts you.

It just means somebody has a different opinion. But the ego can't allow a different opinion because the ego feels its existence is threatened by a different opinion because ego's identification with thought and a mental position. This is, on a personal level, this can become an entire war between nations, a similar pattern.

So at first you can see it. Let's say you're observing two people having a discussion. And of course, let's say you are not involved.

Then it's easier for you to see that process at work and realize that usually both of them become drawn into a very negative confrontation simply because they hold different opinions. But for them it's more than an opinion. It's their very self that's threatened.

It's an illusion, but that's how it is perceived. So it's very fundamental and very basic to the huge amount of conflict that arises in human interactions. And it's basically so simple that it's just quite incomprehensible that people haven't realized by now that this is how it works.

And so, but the pattern is so deep-seated that even people who are engaged in spiritual work for years still get drawn into that when their mental position is threatened. No matter how much spirituality, there they are defending their very existence because the pattern is very deep. So alertness is required.

If you don't want to carry on in that way for the rest of your life and be part of that, madness ultimately, dysfunction ultimately, because it creates continuous conflict and negative feelings and so on and interferes with the true relationship with another human being. Be aware in yourself of this process when and as it happens. And for that, you have to wait until the moment comes when somebody contradicts you or says, no, you're not right, or I don't agree, or whatever they say.

And then you have to be alert. What is it that comes up when one wants to defeat the other or protect itself? So that is a very vital thing, but presence is required.

The pattern is deep, very deep-seated. Without the presence, each time, every time, it will take you over and you'll be lost. So alertness, I can't remember what the question was, but this is vital.

Ah, yes. Sometimes when I hear you talk about presence, it seems like you're describing a state in which there's no mental or emotional content, and yet I experience emotions in presence. So we've been talking now just about experiencing the absence of presence, and there's a mental-emotional stream that comes up.

You can do it to yourself also. You can have a discussion with yourself. You can doubt yourself.

You can have an argument with yourself. You can have one part of your mind accusing another part of your mind of being lazy, for example, or of being not good enough. And then you have to have a similar argument with one part of you.

Your mind splits itself in two and says, you should know better by now. You should do better. Why did you do this?

Well, I just couldn't help it. No presence. So, yes, there can be presence when there are thoughts and emotions, and it is vital that there should be presence in the background, which means just you're aware that certain emotions are coming through you, and you're not the emotion, but you're the awareness.

You're aware that certain thoughts are there. You're aware that you have an opinion. You're aware that you're voicing your opinion.

That's fine, but you are not in the opinion. Your sense of self isn't in the opinion. Your sense of self is the awareness.

And then you can express an opinion, and you can say, the universe is, in essence, consciousness. And then the other person says, that's a load of rubbish, or whatever they say. Mumbo-jumbo, you are talking mumbo-jumbo.

Show me the consciousness, or whatever the flat-footed materialist is saying to you. And then observe. See whether you actually know that you, the universe, which means you, ultimately comes down to you, this is where you experience the universe as yourself.

Do you know that the universe is consciousness, or do you just believe that the universe? At that moment, are you the consciousness, or are you the belief that you are consciousness? If you are the belief, then you are the thought, and then you'll be defending yourself.

So you'll be shouting back at the other person, that they are narrow-minded bigots. Or there is an awareness in the background, and then you say the universe is consciousness, and the other person says, that's a load of rubbish, then you say, well, I'm sure in your perception, the universe is not consciousness, and that's fine. Why should you believe that the universe, if that's not within your reality?

Fine, you are entitled to believing that the universe is a soup of chemicals. That's fine, that's your reality. I'm perfectly comfortable to allow you your reality of living in a soup of chemicals, or whatever, atoms floating around, whatever it is, or the gray matter of the brain producing the illusion of consciousness, whatever.

It's fine. No defensiveness anymore, and no negative feelings. This is why I liked the, when Obama said, you don't need to be disagreeable to disagree, you don't need to become disagreeable when you disagree.

The deeper implication is, you're not identified with your mental position. He couldn't say that, because nobody would understand what he's talking about. Well, only some people would understand.

There's awareness in the background, so presence or awareness is there. While things happen in the foreground. The foreground can be your thoughts.

The foreground can be your emotions. The foreground can be whatever is happening around you. And so the perceptions of whatever is happening outside, there's also, you're not perceiving through the screen of concepts or thoughts, you're perceiving through, you are the awareness, not the thoughts.

And even if a thought comes and says, that person looks weird, then you realize it's just a thought in your head, and when you're finally communicating with that person, you can still be the awareness and communicate as awareness, rather than communicate as if the thought, this person is weird, were the reality. You realize it's just a thought that came into the head, and you don't impose the thought on the person and then relate to that person as if it were true, and suddenly you're talking to this weird person. What are you going to, everything, it'll distort everything.

Or you want something, but the thought says, this person could be helpful to me, or whatever the ego says. That's a thought. Be there as the spacious presence.

Now the question is, yes, of course there can be presence while thoughts happen or emotions happen, including sadness or anger, but the questioner asks, it seems like you're describing a state in which there's no mental or emotional content. There's also the possibility of presence becoming so intensified at times that all thoughts and emotions become obliterated. This is very different from suppressing emotions or thoughts.

It's simply that the presence that arises becomes so intense that just thoughts or emotions don't arise, and usually it could happen in a limit situation, as existentialist philosophers call it, when you're in a life or death situation. It could happen that presence sometimes can become so intense, or it can become, for no reason at all it can happen, and you're simply sitting in your room, and suddenly there's no thought whatsoever, there's no emotion, there's just an intense aliveness. You haven't deadened yourself, because sometimes people believe if you have no emotion you're dead.

You haven't deadened yourself. There's an intense aliveness, a different kind of aliveness than the emotion, a vibrantly alive field of intense consciousness. So that can

arise sometimes, and it's beautiful.

I sometimes spend periods of time without thought and without emotion, and it's beautiful. So nature, walking around nature, or with nothing particular to think about, why think? Or sitting in a cafe, drinking a cup of coffee, why think?

Just be the alert presence. So you have the presence can be there without thought and emotion at times that will happen, or presence can be there as a background to whatever emotions or thoughts are there. And presence can be lost completely, in which case all you have is thoughts and emotions, and you will believe that you are the thought and the emotion.

That's the unconscious state. So for us it's important to be there as the emotions happen, and I suggest you work particularly with people, talking to people, exchange of opinions and viewpoints, observing aggression, observing defensiveness, observing negativity flowing into, just because somebody has not the same opinion that you have. And then don't condemn yourself and say, oh, I shouldn't be feeling this.

No, just again observe that, just observe that suddenly you've become angry with this person. And instead of saying, oh dear, I failed miserably in my spiritual practice, no, just say, okay, I'm just noticing that. You're no longer in it, you're already out of it when you notice it.

So be compassionate with yourself, but the important thing is you're aware. So, we all know the famous joke about the person, when you tell the person, why are you so angry? The person says, I am not angry!

And that's of course a typical example of somebody who doesn't know, has absolutely no awareness, in the middle of anger denies that there's anger. Sometimes when I listen to your lecture and I am open and resting in spaciousness, it literally feels like my brain is being rewired in some way. I've also heard people begin to talk about something that is referred to as the neurophysiology of awakening, the idea that awakened consciousness is accompanied by certain changes in brain states and even the actual wiring of the brain.

What is your sense of this? Does awakening change the brain? Well, I'm sure it does.

I haven't looked inside it, but I remember Krishnamurti often mentioned, he had this strange expression, we need a mutation of the brain cells, he would say, a mutation of the brain cells. And he believed that this is what was happening when we change. And of course, although I have not looked inside anybody's brain, and I don't usually talk from the perspective of physiology, but of course every change that goes on inside you, even minor change, has an effect on the physiology of the body.

People realized, for example, a long time ago I believe in medicine there was a case,

whenever it was 200 years ago, a man had a bullet hole in his stomach and he just couldn't heal. And that's how doctors found out for the first time about what the inside of the stomach looks like when it's working. And they found, for example, when he gets angry, the stomach lining gets very red.

Whenever he got angry. So whatever emotion you experience already affects the body. Whatever thought you have already has a certain effect on the body and changes the chemistry of the body and so on.

And of course any change in consciousness is also going to affect, I know that although I haven't looked inside the brain, but I know that any change in consciousness affects, think of a lemon. Think you're just drinking, you squeeze a lemon and you're drinking it right now. Okay, mouth is watering.

So a thought affects the physiology of even the simplest thought. Or any thought, any negative thought will have an effect on the body. Any emotion will have an effect on the body.

And of course a change in consciousness, of course it's going to rewire everything in the brain, I'm sure of that. Not that I usually address it from that point of view. So I'm sure Krishnamurti is right when he speaks of a mutation of the brain cells.

But what comes first, the chicken or the egg? Are we awakening because our brain cells are mutating or are our brain cells mutating because we are awakening? I don't know, I don't need to know.

Perhaps both are true, who knows. It may just be one perspective and another possible perspective. They happen simultaneously, so whether chicken or egg comes first, I don't know.

But I'm sure that it is happening, it cannot not happen. So the expression, the question I use is, I feel like my brain is being rewired. Of course that's applying a different, more simple technology, an analogy for what happens in the brain, like wires.

But yes, definitely it's not only in the brain. Many people also report noticing changes in the cells in the body becoming more alive, like an intensification in what they feel in every cell of the body, an intensification of the energy that's moving through the cells of the body. As you sit here, sometimes you can be alone and it happens.

As you put all your attention into the inner body, suddenly you feel it's alive. The ancient Taoists, they already knew that, so this is how they came up with things like Qigong and so on, to put attention into the body. Their idea was, not only because you feel more alive and can do more, but also they believed you can prolong your life in that way, but that doesn't really matter how long your body remains here.

What matters is whether consciousness is flowering through this form, which can happen right now.

[Speaker 14] (8:21:56 - 8:23:15)

My question is really, what do you make of me? I've been a seeker for 40 years, and my first Eckhart was Meister Eckhart, and I read him when I was a teenager, and so on and so forth. I run hot and cold, and it seems to me at this point, after all those years, that I'm not in control of this.

The suffering happens on its own, and that's a great teacher, as you say. And then your teachings and others. And so I've come to the point of just giving up, in the sense that when you give up, when you resign, with the sense not of bitterness, but with peace, then the natural state comes on its own, and you stay there.

But I don't know, I'm just who I am, and I don't know if this amounts to anything. So my question is, what do you make of such a person that doesn't know?

[Speaker 1] (8:23:16 - 8:23:27)

Okay, thank you. May I just ask you, before you... May I ask you, suffering arises in certain forms still?

[Speaker 14] (8:23:29 - 8:24:07)

In December, which was, well, I'll just say a few months ago, I underwent a huge spiritual opportunity because of some severe suffering in relation to loss. And I, of course, read your stuff millions of times, and I thought, well, this is a great opportunity. But it didn't quite, it worked some, but it didn't really quite work, because what I wanted was the loss to not be a loss.

And so that happened, and I'm not miserable, no. I mean, as a general rule, like you were describing your youth. No, I'm not like that.

[Speaker 1] (8:24:09 - 8:37:17)

So... Okay, thank you, thank you. Well, it seems to me there's a certain degree of acceptance in you already, and there's still also some non-acceptance still.

So the question is, well, is there anything I can do about that? Perhaps you're asking, and that's a very familiar question that is often asked, is there anything we can do to bring it about, the state of non-suffering, the state, the awakened state, the state of presence? Is there anything we can do about it to bring it about or to speed it up, or is it a question of simply recognizing there's nothing I can do about it?

So you have the two schools in which we have, so to speak, different teachers will tell

you different things. The teachers, for example, of the Advaita tradition, non-duality, will usually tell you, why do you come here, why do you listen to me, there's nothing you can do, go home. And yet they could carry on talking to people for some reason.

And then there are others who will tell you, well, you really need to want to awaken, and unless your desire to awaken is as powerful as the drowning man's desire for air, you're not going to awaken. So you have one, some teachers telling you this, other teachers telling you that, and what am I telling you? I'm telling you that either one of them as a single position is not right and is incomplete.

You can actually bring the two together and realize there is something you can do, but you're not really doing it, but there's nothing that you can do that is not done by the totality of consciousness. You're not separate from the totality of consciousness. So continuously, whether you think you're doing it or whether you think you're not doing it, it makes no difference, the totality of consciousness is acting through you every moment.

But the totality of consciousness finds it helpful for you sometimes to believe that there is a lot you can do, because it's one way in which it comes through you. So this is why I sometimes say you can choose to be present. You can choose to take your attention out of drifting away into past and future continuously.

Okay, I'm choosing presence now. And then, of course, some people will come and ask, well, who is choosing? Do you have a choice?

Well, when you think you're choosing presence, then, of course, at that moment consciousness is moving through you. But consciousness finds it helpful, it seems to me, for you to believe that you can choose presence, that's how it comes through you. So the two are actually one.

It's neither one nor the other. And so any teaching that tells you there's absolutely nothing you can do is not quite complete. The other one that tells you, yes, it's all up to you, that's not quite right either.

You have to bring the two together. And so sometimes it is helpful to believe, just to realize, yes, I have a choice, knowing deep down, of course, you only have a choice because at that moment consciousness is there. And so you can be practicing presence, living in presence as much as possible is one way in which presence arises in you.

And so one thing you have absolutely... The first arising of presence always comes as a complete act of grace. And then seemingly it seems like you can do something about it.

But all that happens is that presence is intensifying. And the individual then thinks, oh, I can now choose to be present. Yeah, why can you choose to be present?

Because there's enough presence there in you. It's arising. And so why is it arising in me?

Of course, once you ask a why question, there's no end. Every answer to a why question leads to another why. You can try it out with anything.

And so often people ask why questions. Why do we have to have an ego? Why aren't we all awake already?

Why? And if you give one answer, I'm not saying you are asking those questions, but if you give one answer, of course there's immediately another question. And so you can experiment with that and you will find there's never an end to the why that the mind can ask.

So I think, was it in gestalt therapy where why are called dirty questions or something? So the mind is playing around. So for you, presence practice, surrender practice, present moment practice, making the present moment your friend, bringing a certain alertness to sense perceptions when you're going about your normal life.

Don't wait for suffering to arise and then see if you can be conscious there, but invite consciousness in. The fact that you can do it means it's happening. Otherwise you couldn't invite consciousness into this moment, into your life, this presence.

So you are not doing it, but sometimes it's good to feel that you are doing it and you can do it. And then acceptance comes more easily as one of the main practices then is inner alignment with whatever form this moment takes. That, I would say, then becomes for you the main spiritual practice.

And that is not, even that is not, sometimes people may regard it as a passive practice to say yes to the present moment, to allow this moment to be as it is for the simple reason that it already is, and the recognition that to say no to what is is a form of insanity. So if it already is, it is. You might as well be aligned with the is-ness of this moment internally.

Of course, that's quite obvious, otherwise you suffer. So inner alignment with this moment as it is as the primary spiritual practice. Now this is regarded sometimes as a passive practice because it seems to be, I have to surrender, surrender is sometimes used to describe it also, surrender to life, and so it sounds passive, you have to accept every moment, but it's not actually, it's not passive because it's passive and active at the same time.

To actually allow this moment to be as it is is also a very dynamic practice because it goes against thousands of years of conditioning, and not against by making thousands of years of conditioning into an opponent or into an enemy, but in the sense that the light of consciousness needs to be strong enough to burn away, to dissolve, to transmute

thousands of years of conditioning, of egoic resistance to what is. So it requires presence, and presence is dynamic, as well as it's both yin and yang, presence is both the sword of presence and presence is also the allowing, both, it's not one or the other, and both, this doesn't quite make sense to the mind, that both are actually, can be, at the same time, presence is a sword and the vessel that allows, it's both, it's passive and active. Within the passivity, there's the activity, within the activity, there's the passive.

So that's really, that's the secret of in alignment with this moment, it's a very powerful practice, it's not just, if it's misunderstood, people think it's, you go like, it's not, it requires intense presence, and you, I haven't used that expression in a while, I used to speak of, it has come back to me, the sword of presence, which cuts through time, this is the dynamic aspect of bringing a yes to the present moment, just, that cuts through unhappiness, cuts through all kinds of story-making in the mind, it cuts through, it slices away past and future, so you imagine you have a big cheese, and you cut, and one part of the past falls off, ah, present moment. So the, and yet it's also the, what you see, sometimes the yin aspect, what you see in Kuan Yin and Mary statues, the allow everything, allow everything, this moment is everything, allow this moment to be as it is.

So, that and that, well, this is the feminine, and this is the masculine, and of course they go together, to be balanced, the balanced human being has, they're both active in you, they're both in you. One more time, I tell you, don't wait for some form of suffering to arise to give you an excuse for being present, be present and normal when there's nothing, no particular challenge. Also, so that in ordinary situations, just nature, as I, we talked about nature, be present there, don't, sometimes you can drift off, some people can get stuck in a certain, at a certain intermediate level, where there's, they're half in the mind and half in presence.

So, move beyond that. Many people do experience shifts still. Old consciousness, new consciousness, being drawn into the old, oh, dreadful, poor me, drama, completely immersed in the drama of life, and then come out of it again, oh, what was that all about?

How could I have been drawn into that again? And then it happens again. We are a transitional species at this time on the planet, and that's quite interesting, the, almost on a tightrope, walking on a tightrope, you can only go forward, it's harder to go backwards on a tightrope.

[Speaker 23] (8:37:23 - 8:37:23)

Thank you.

[Speaker 19] (8:37:41 - 8:38:01)

I think I understand, I definitely feel the interconnectedness of all of us, and the oneness.

What I'd love to hear your thoughts on are the unique aspects of our individual existence beyond the world of form and ego. In other words, is there a part of us, a soul or an energy that transcends death?

[Speaker 1] (8:38:03 - 8:45:17)

Well, there's the form, which is not just the physical form that you are, there's also the mental form, the psychological form that you are, and deeper than that, there's an energetic formation. Also, consciousness has taken form temporarily and appears as a human being, but what you see on the surface is only a surface appearance, and underneath it, there's the energy that animates the form and that temporarily takes on that particular form. Also, even that energy, as long as it's, that it's behind the body, is there and outlives the body for quite some time, and it's still form, but form is not separate from that which animates the form, ultimately.

It just appears to be. So in the same way that the wave movement of the sea is not separate from the sea, the ripple on the ocean is not separate from the ocean, but for a little while, it appears as something separate. So...

on the level of form here, you are a man or a woman, you are of a certain age, you have a certain psychological makeup according to your past and perhaps even past lifetimes, that all operates on the level of form. So you can honor the level of form for what it is without worshipping it or identifying with it and believing that this is who you truly are. But it doesn't mean that you totally reject it, because it is not separate from the one life, the one unmanifested, timeless life that appears in billions of life forms that continuously come and go, appear, disappear, appear, disappear.

Anybody would very quickly find it easy to be connected with the formless dimension if you could see a speeded-up version of life forms as they come and go, and bodies being born, growing up, reaching maturity, getting old, finally becoming decrepit and dissolving. If you could see these things in one room, if you could see within two minutes of the people sitting in this room popping out of existence, at least on the level of body, one after the other, dissolving as if they'd never been like soap bubbles, you would very quickly sense an underlying... First you would be amazed.

You'd go... Even with flowers, sometimes you see it in films. A flower comes out of the ground, and immediately withers, and it's gone.

If you could see that, you would easily connect with that which is beyond form, and that is the power of becoming aware of the fleetingness of all forms. The essential thing is to be connected with that, and then you can honor the form as which you appear for a while and be active on the level of form. It doesn't say, I'm the formless, so I'm never going to do anything again.

No, you can take up things, learn to do this, learn to do that. Not expecting ultimate fulfillment, because nothing is going to give you that on the outside, nothing that you can do or possess or knowledge. None of that can tell you who you essentially are, can give you ultimate fulfillment, and yet you can pursue these things, acquire knowledge, read some more books, enjoy it.

As long as you enjoy it, the level of form has its place. There's no need to say, I'm never going to read another book, because it's all illusion. Or you learn to play an instrument, you learn this, you learn that, you deal with artistic creation, whatever it is, dance, whatever, enjoy the level of form.

But you can only truly enjoy the level of form if you are rooted in the formless. If you don't have that point of stillness, that space of stillness in you while you pursue things, then things will become frustrating to you, and for a little while they might be great, they give you excitement or whatever, or some egoic fulfillment for a little while. Ego is never fulfilled for very long, as the song says, I can't get no satisfaction.

So if you pursue forms and you're not rooted in that essential reality within yourself, all forms will eventually become bitter. Even the most pleasant thing, even if you learn to play the piano, you become the greatest pianist, and one day you won't be the greatest pianist, or somebody is greater than you, or arthritis comes into your hands, or whatever. Or it's no longer fulfilling after a few years.

But whatever it is, all forms that you pursue, for the sake of the form alone, expecting something through your pursuit that it cannot give you, that always life is just one frustrating thing after another, and then people become disillusioned or cynical and don't believe in anything anymore. Well, of course, you've been pursuing all the delusions all your life. And some people lose all interest suddenly in anything because they've seen, but that's, perhaps it was, there was a man who wrote, I don't know how it got into the New Testament, one book of the New Testament.

Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. Written by somebody who's done it all and has seen how vain, now vanity in that sense is the old meaning of the word. It means useless, empty of meaning.

Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. I've done it all, he says. I can't quote it literally, but it's worth going back to.

It's a lovely piece of writing. It's nothing to do with vanity.